

The PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

Supermen of the Ice

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by Stan Fischler

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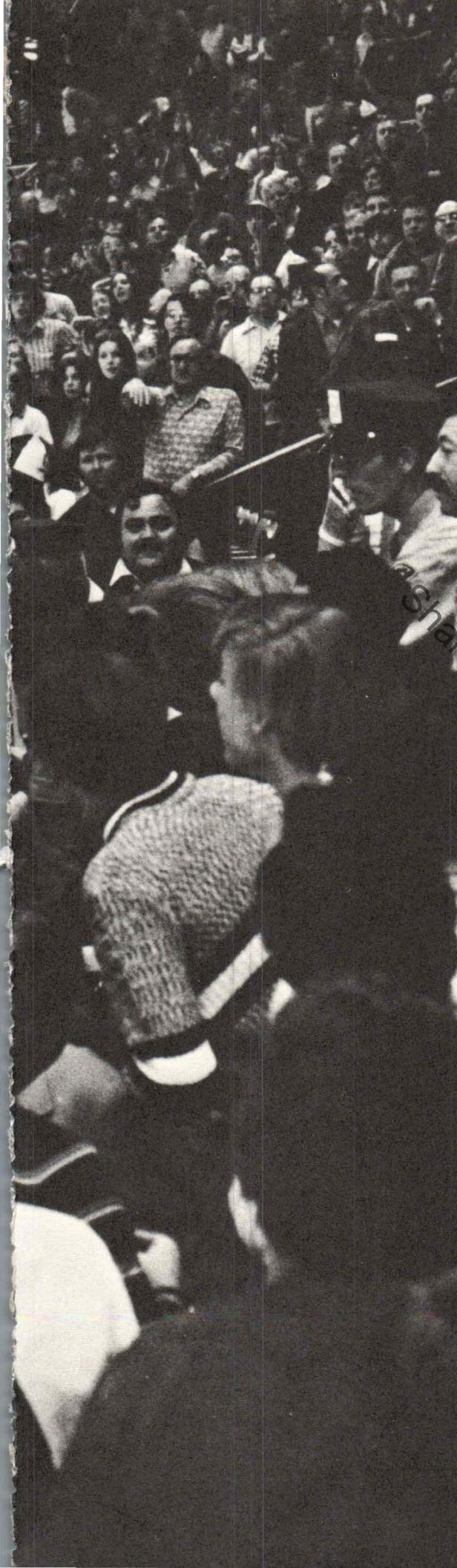
FISCHLER

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The
**PHILADELPHIA
FLYERS**

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Supermen of the Ice

by Stan Fischler

A Stuart L. Daniels Book

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THE PHILADELPHIA FLYERS
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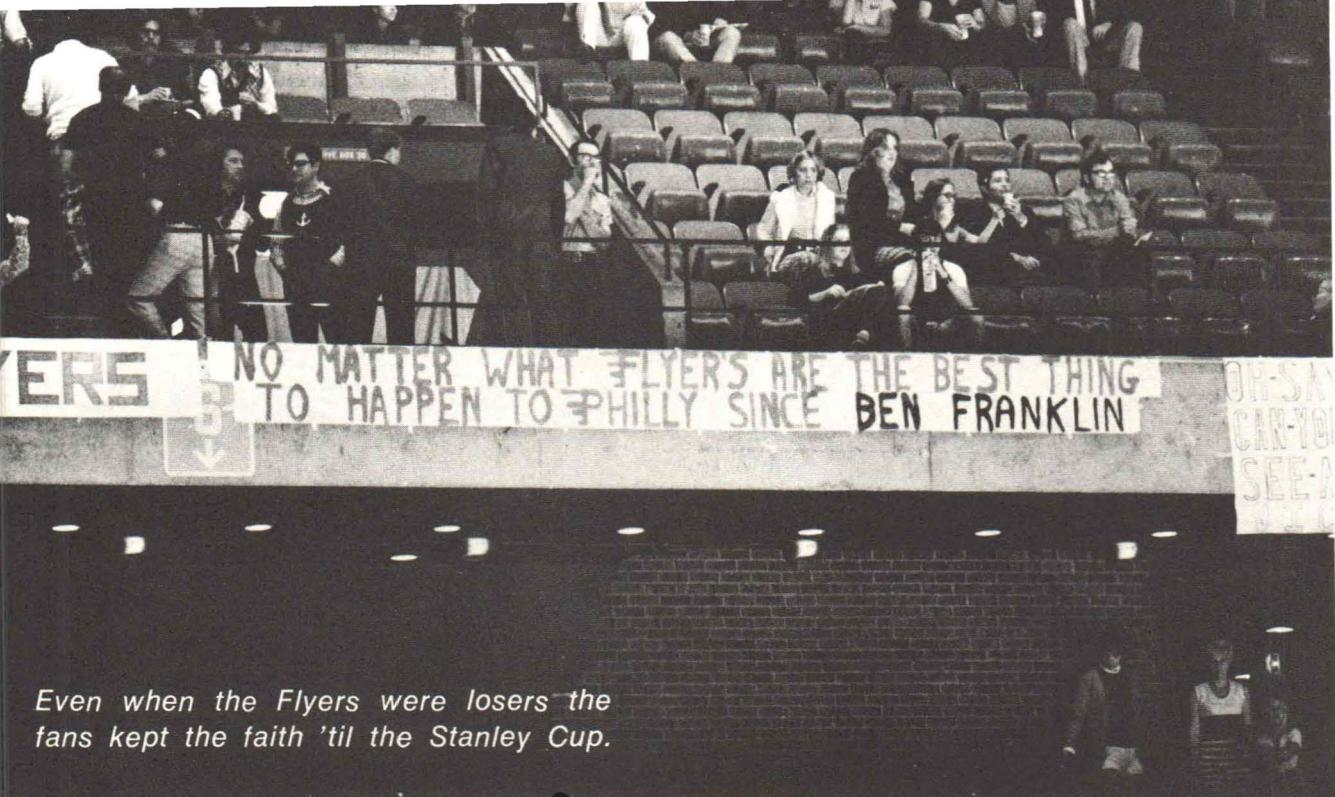


hockey comes to philadelphia

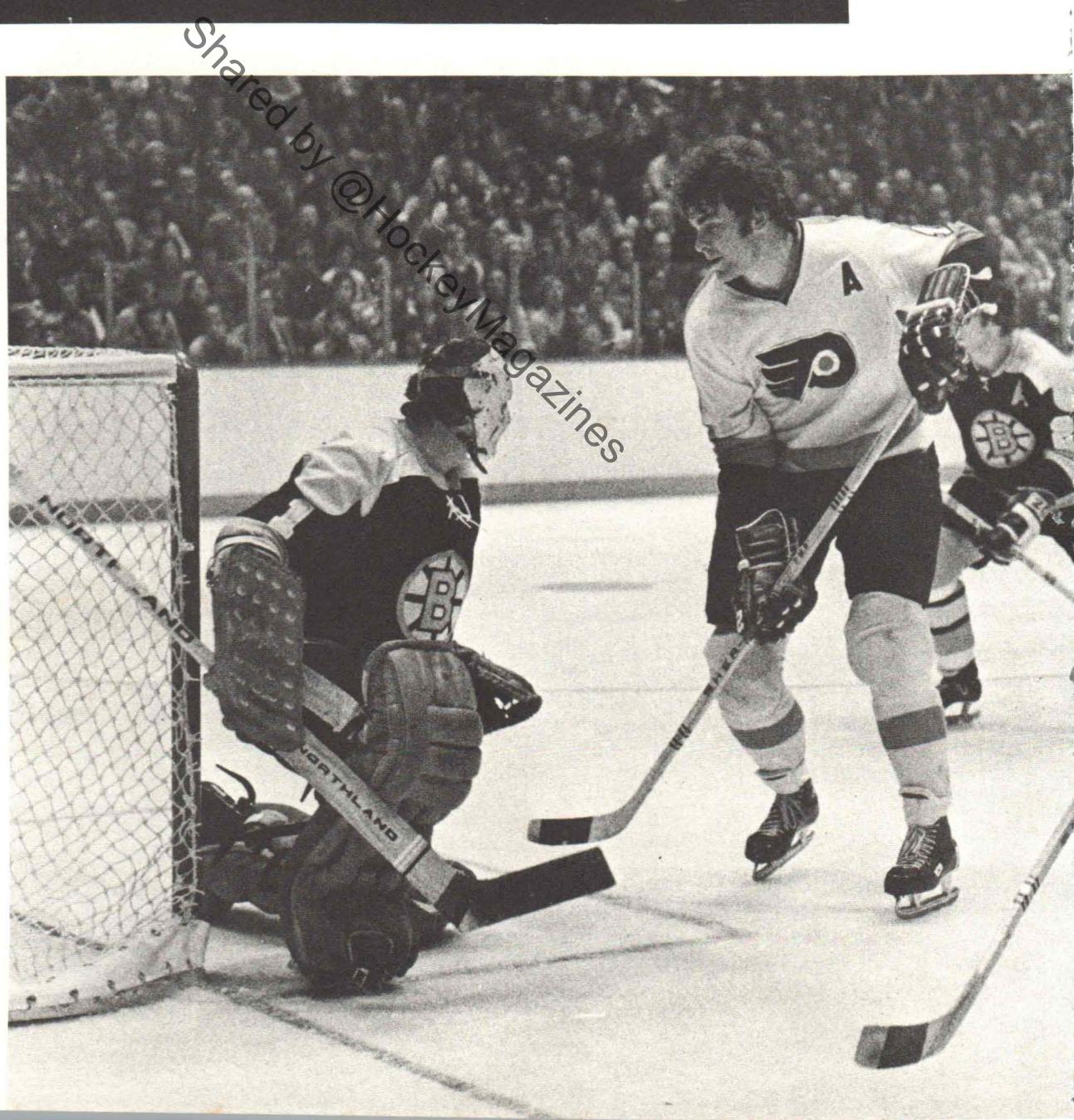
Bobby Clarke and Boston's Phil Esposito watch the flight of the puck after a face-off in the Flyer zone.

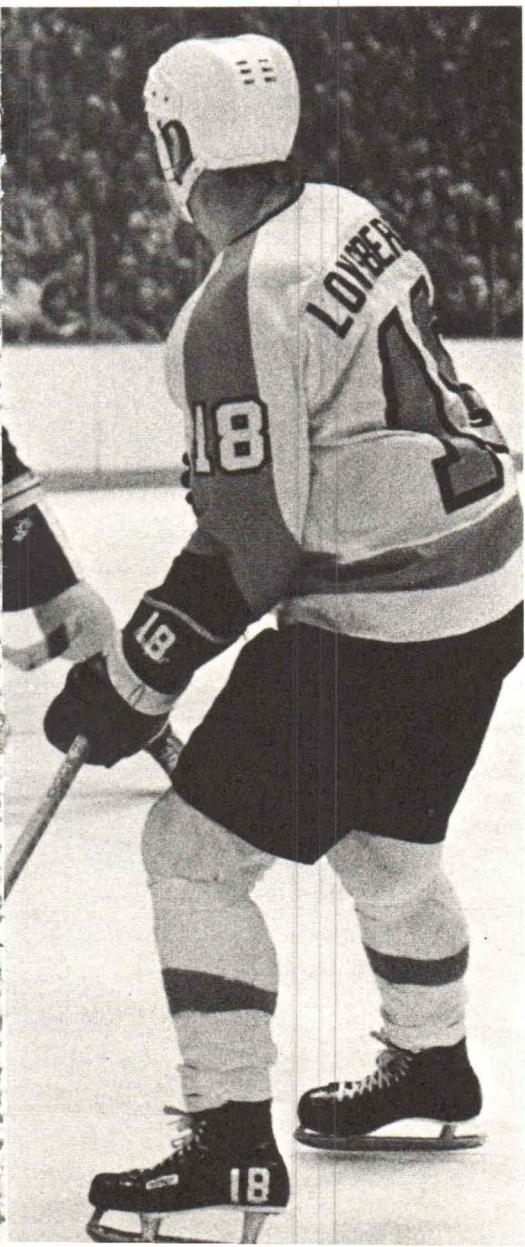
Organized amateur hockey was popular along the North Atlantic seaboard as early as the latter part of the 19th century when Canadian teams introduced the intriguing game to the United States. Boston became the most enthusiastic center of the ice sport, and soon New York caught fire quickly followed by Philadelphia.

Construction of The Arena in Philadelphia paved the way for the advent of professional hockey in the City of Brotherly Love. Located at 45th and Market Streets, The Arena opened February 14, 1920 with 6,500 seats available for hockey matches.



Even when the Flyers were losers the fans kept the faith 'til the Stanley Cup.





*An assault on the Bruin goal; but where
is the puck?*

While it was an added attraction for the city's sports fans, The Arena eventually proved a hindrance to the aspirations of Philadelphians for a major league hockey club. After all, it hardly could compare with the 13,900-seat Boston Garden nor the 15,925 seat Madison Square Garden in New York.

As a result Philadelphia had to settle for something less than the National Hockey League when pro hockey made its debut there. Philadelphia's ice franchise, the Arrows, was accepted in the strong Canadian-American League for the 1927-28 season and minor league hockey was off and running.

This road to permanent major league status in hockey took many curious turns, one of which actually led to the NHL for a brief and disastrous excursion during the 1930-31 season. It was then that the NHL owners allowed the Pittsburgh franchise, mired in a sea of red ink, to be transferred to Philadelphia's Arena in the hopes that fans would fill the building to see a "major-league" team.

Unfortunately, the Pittsburgh sextet was mediocre-to-fair at its very best and there was little evidence that a metamorphosis would take place when the same players donned uniforms of the "new" Philadelphia Quakers. The most exciting aspect of the Quakers was its owner, former lightweight boxing champion Benny Leonard. Presenting the same ebullience and aggressiveness he had shown in the ring, Leonard promised Philadelphians everything short of the Stanley Cup. Delivery was something else.

Hockey writers plumb the depths of their imagination to find adequate words to describe Leonard's legion of losers but the scores said it better. By the time the 1930-31 season had ended the Quakers had created a special niche in the NHL Record Book. They held the modern record for fewest wins in a season (4); fewest points in a season (12). Attendance, as might be expected, was meager confirming the good taste of Philadelphia sports fans who knew better than to pay good money to see a team that finished the season with a record of four wins, 36 losses and four ties.

Defenseman Joe Watson prevents New York's Bill Harris from getting the puck in Flyer zone.

Sighs of relief could be heard up and down Broad Street—as well as in the other NHL cities—when in September 1931 NHL president Frank Calder announced that Philadelphia and the NHL would be forever rid of the Quakers. Nobody was happier to see the Quakers evaporate than Herb Gardiner, manager of the Arrows and a rather competent hockey entrepreneur who had been overshadowed by Benny Leonard's histrionics.

Unlike Leonard, Gardiner knew so much about hockey he could precisely describe the height, weight and specific ingredients of everything from a puck to a goal pipe. He also was able to do something the Quakers never dreamed possible; win a championship for a Philadelphia hockey club.

In 1932–33 the Arrows ruled the Canadian-American League with an iron stick, winning the pennant with ease over second-place Providence. Unfortunately, the Arrows soon began to plummet, artistically and financially, and finally folded completely after the 1934–35 season.

Hockey in Philadelphia was now saved by the New York Rangers who agreed to operate the Arrows as a farm club; from 1935–36 on they were the Ramblers, stocked with youngsters who, someday, would wear the red, white and blue uniform of the Rangers.

The Ramblers became one of the truly superb minor league teams. Nothing attests to this better than the fact that three members of the Philadelphia sextet—Neil Colville, Bryan Hextall and Babe Pratt—eventually were voted into the Hockey Hall Of Fame.

These, however, were just a few stars in the Ramblers' galaxy. Phil Watson was a whirling dervish at center while Alex Shibicky was the balance-wheel on the line with Neil Colville and brother Mac Colville. They terrorized enemy goaltenders on virtually every shift and were one of the principal reasons why Philadelphia won all the marbles in the International-American League, descendant of the old Canadian-American League, in 1935–36.





What the Rangers had done, by sponsoring the Ramblers and pouring their best young talent into the arena, was to create a minor league hockey dynasty. It paid off for Philadelphia, which stayed at or near the top of the International-American League and it did likewise for the Rangers who won the Stanley Cup in 1940, sprinkled with players who had been cutting their puck teeth in the little building at 45th and Market.

The start of World War II marked the decline and fall of the Ramblers. What amounted to the strip-mining of Philadelphia's hockey talent by the Rangers began taking its toll since the New York club failed to fill the vacancies with equally adept performers.

The Ramblers finished last in the 1940-41 campaign and then took their pucks, sticks and farmhands back to New York.

Professional hockey continued to be played at The Arena; only this time the team was called the Rockets and they were conspicuously bad. Their life span was as long as Benny Leonard's Quakers—exactly one season—and they made way for a new era in Philadelphia hockey.

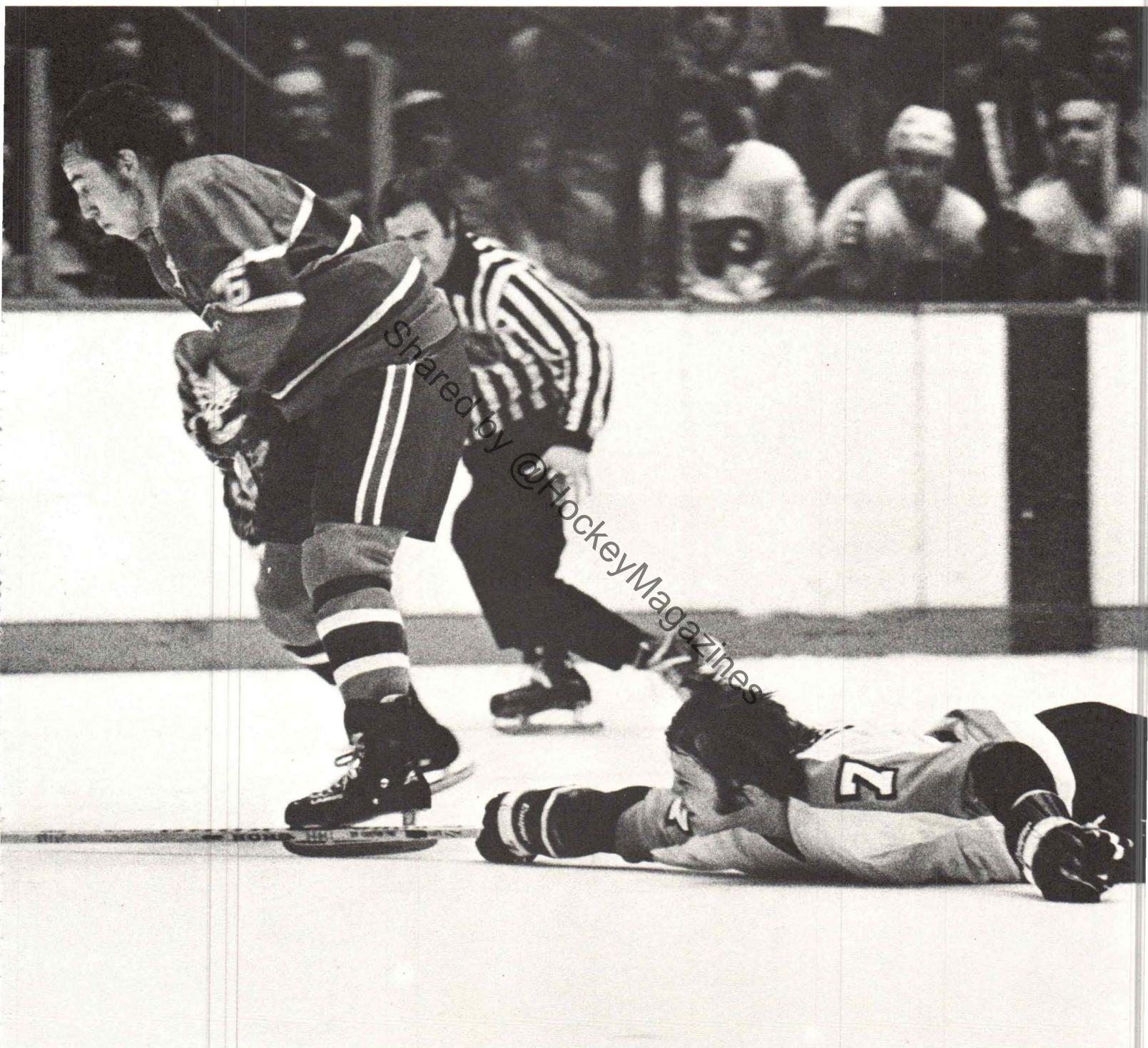
The new team the Falcons, was part of the Eastern Amateur Hockey League which had been, for almost a decade, purveying an exceptionally exciting brand of hockey. None of the players, however, were really amateurs.

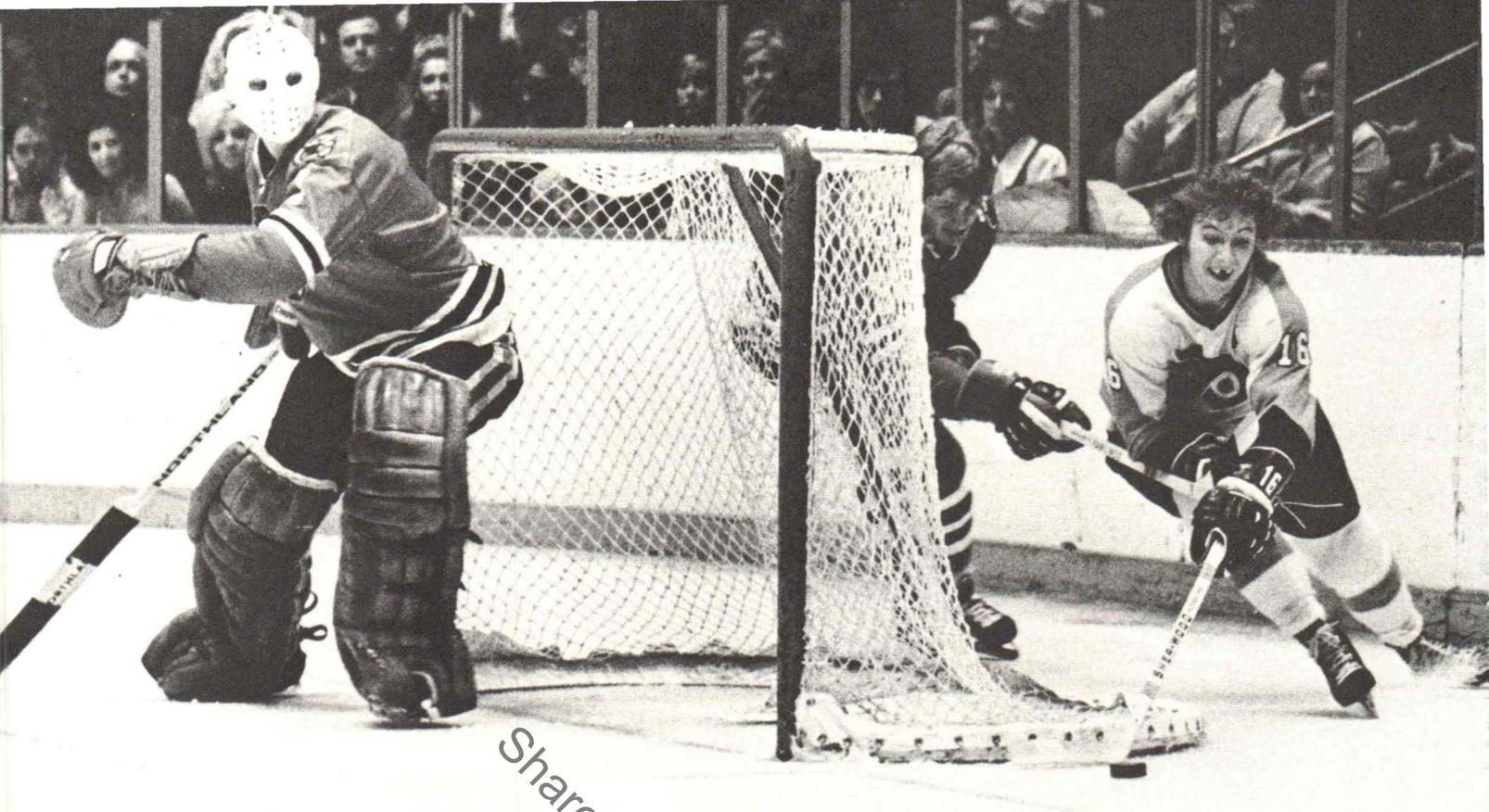
Like the Arrows, the Ramblers and Quakers, members of the Falcons were paid salaries and treated the same way as other professional athletes. However, they were under the banner of the EAHL which, in turn, was a member of the Amateur Hockey Association of the United States. The AHAUS defined as amateur as anyone who signed an amateur card. Under this broad and rather loose interpretation, a player could be carrying an "amateur card," as the Falcons did, but still be paid. Hence, the Philadelphia skaters were either quasi-amateurs or quasi-professionals. Take your pick.

Considering the fact that the Falcons were not organized until a few days immediately preceding the start of the 1942-43 season, they conducted themselves with honor even if they weren't victorious. Although they



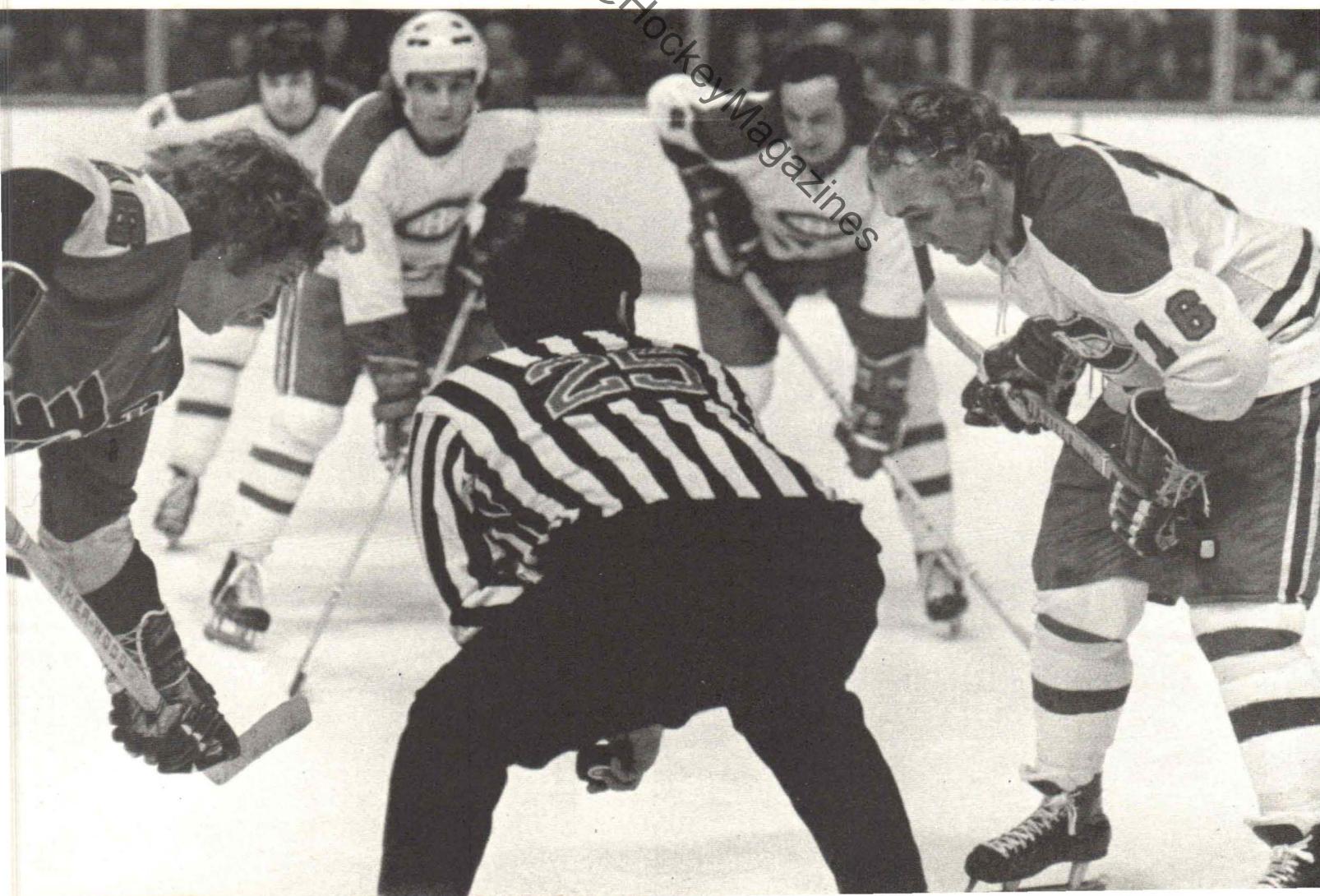
Bill Barber is down but still reaches for the puck.





Bobby Clarke gets around Keith Magnuson of Chicago and poses a threat at the Black Hawk doorstep.

Bobby Clarke gets set to face-off against Henri Richard of Montreal.



finished last in the four-team EAHL, the Philadelphians took the Falcons to their collective hearts and backed the team enthusiastically enough for them to make another appearance in 1943-44.

This time the Falcons' manager, Redvers Mackenzie, had ample time to organize a first-rate team. His cornerstone was a sinister-looking defenseman named Joe Desson who wielded his stick as if it was a machete and he frightened referees as much as he put the fear of God into oncoming forwards. "There weren't many tougher players in all of organized hockey than Desson," says New York Rangers' manager Emile Francis who played goal behind Nasty Joe that season.

Neither Desson, nor Francis, nor any of the other colorful players who wore the Falcons' uniform were able to deliver an EAHL championship to Philadelphia but they did something more meaningful. The Falcons proved that Philadelphians would turn out for exciting hockey and that hockey, properly packaged, was a crowd-pleasing form of entertainment.

The bosses of The Arena thought so; they applied for a franchise in the American League which then was second only to the NHL in terms of power and quality of play. The AHL accepted Philadelphia for the 1946-47 season and the Rockets now replaced the Falcons.

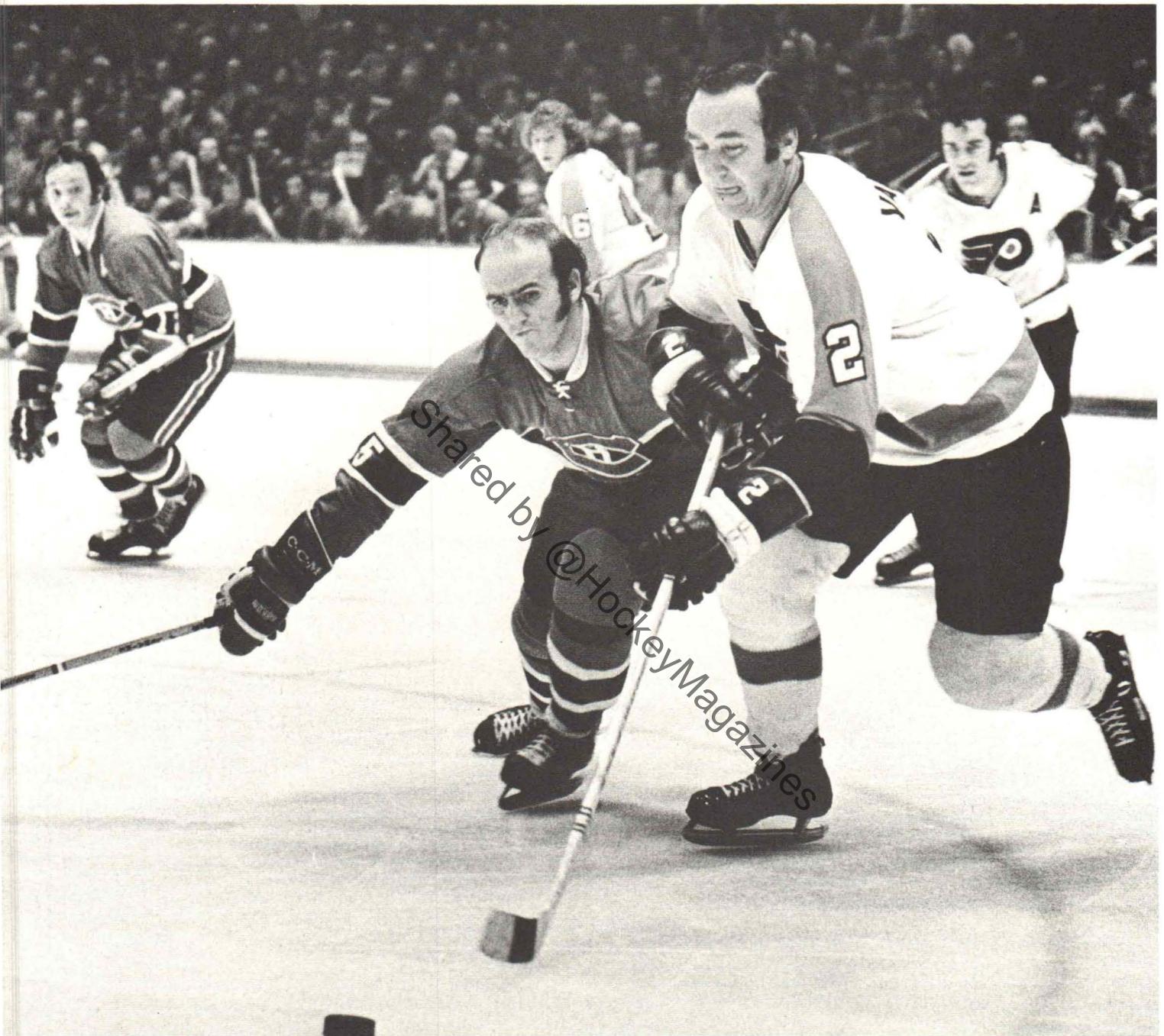
Unlike the Ramblers, the Rockets were not supported by an NHL team and were unable to obtain some of the better young pre-major league aces.

The Rockets developed an affinity for the cellar but climbed to fourth in 1947-48. Their basic problem, lack of a big-league affiliate, was never solved and at the conclusion of the 1948-49 season the club folded.

Hockey returned to The Arena on and off during the nineteen-fifties and early sixties; it was fun hockey, to be sure, but it was "bush" by the standards of a big-league city. The Arena was not really suitable for hockey and Philadelphia sports enthusiasts were demanding a better arena not only for hockey, but for other major indoor attractions.

Finally, plans were announced to build a \$12,000,000 new sports palace to be called The Spectrum.

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The puck is stopped at the goalmouth.



new team in town

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The Spectrum would be completed by October 1967, guaranteeing the National Hockey League that Philadelphia was capable of housing big-league-sized crowds when it expanded from six to twelve teams in the 1967-68 season. Whereupon Philadelphia came forth with a bid.

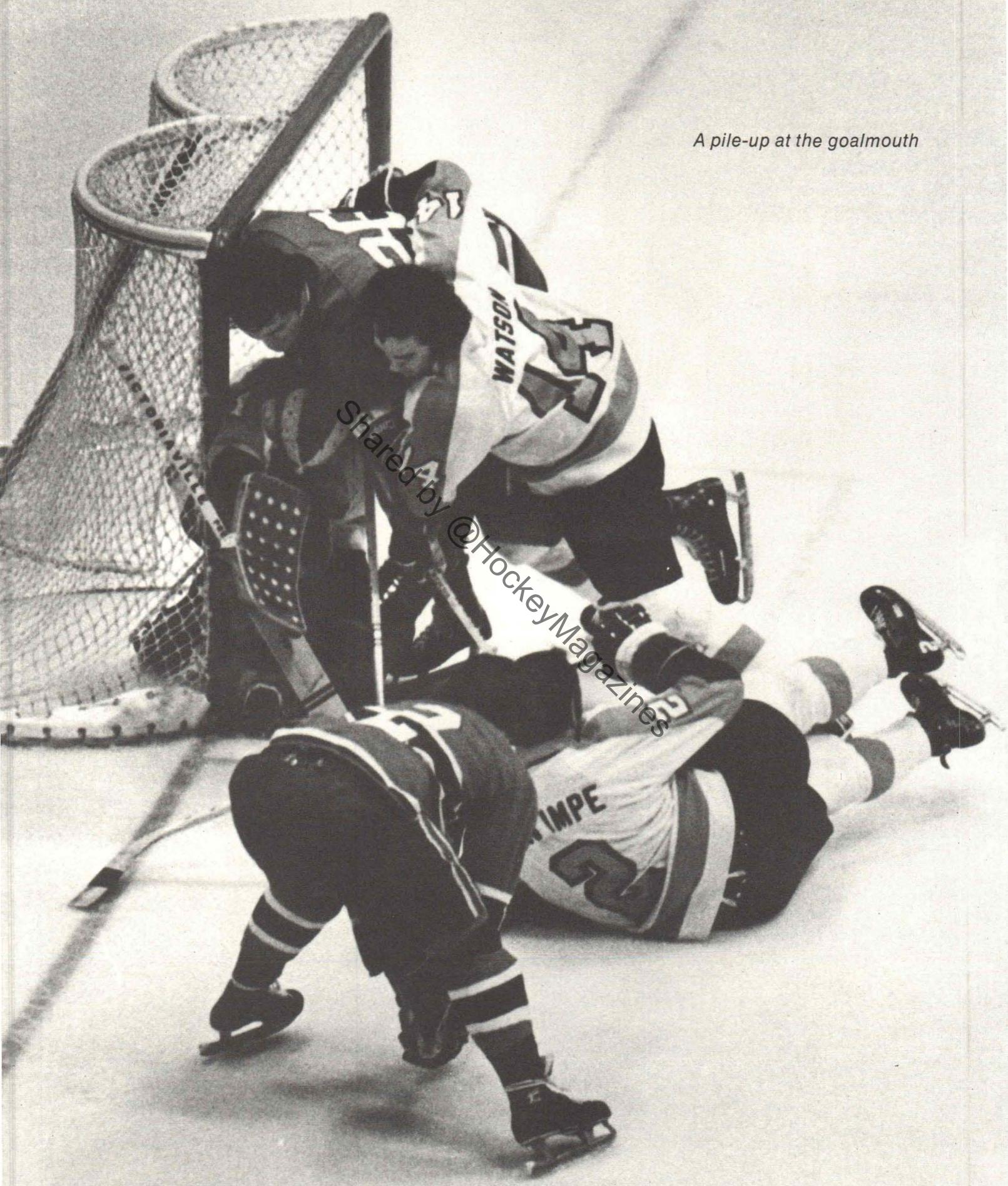
Gaining entrance to the highly-successful NHL was tantamount to getting a free ticket to Heaven, as far as major league sportsmen were concerned. Attendance in the six-team circuit was close to 100 per cent of the arena capacities. Competition to gain the NHL imprimatur was keen. Applications poured in from almost every major city on the continent.

Goalie Bernie Parent gives shooters very little net to aim at. His 12 shutouts in 1973-74 showed his effectiveness.



Shared by @HockeyMagazines

A pile-up at the goalmouth



When the cigar smoke cleared from the NHL's boardroom, Philadelphia had emerged a winner, along with Minnesota, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Oakland, and Pittsburgh, each of which would comprise the NHL's new West Division. Thus were the Philadelphia Flyers born.

Although hockey had proven a guaranteed money-maker during the six-team NHL era nobody was absolutely certain how fans in the six new expansion cities would react to the ice sport. The trick, of course, was to produce a winner. So the Flyers' hierarchy went about the business of putting together a first-rate front office with which to build a winning team.

Bill Putnam, vice president of Morgan Guaranty Trust Company became president of the hockey club. Putnam hired Norman "Bud" Poile, a veteran minor league manager to manage the Flyers. The burly, often outspoken Poile, designated slick-haired Keith Allen, a longtime minor league coach, to run the Flyers behind the bench.

Edward M. Snider by now the Flyers' majority stockholder and Bill Putnam jetted to Montreal in June 1967 for the draft. They returned with two first-rate young goaltenders, Bernie Parent and Doug Favell, and a defensive and offensive roster that appeared as good as or better than any of the other expansion clubs.

Another prize catch was defenseman Ed Van Impe, a handsome hitter who skated with a perennial five o'clock shadow. The 5-foot-11, 200 pound Van Impe, one of the "balance-wheels" on Chicago's first-place team in 1966-67, was regarded as one of the Black Hawks' "untouchables." Some critics believed that Chicago made Van Impe available in the 1967 draft because of his unobtrusive style which frequently left him unnoticed in the wake of such aces as Bobby Hull and Stan Mikita.

The Flyers were delighted to obtain Van Impe as the cornerstone of a defense that included John Miszuk, Joe Watson, Dick Cherry and Fern Gauthier. Before the season actually began Larry Zeidel convinced Poile that he was still vigorous enough—although he was approaching 40—to play big-league hockey. He, too, was added to the blue line corps which would develop into the best in the West Division.

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With the defensive fortifications installed, attention now focused on the attack units. This time the Flyers weren't as lucky. There were no stars among the lot but there were some good players headed by Brit Selby, Gary Dornhoefer, Lou Angotti, Pat Hannigan, Don Blackburn, Forbes Kennedy and Leon Rochefort.

The most durable of the forwards and, ultimately, the best of the bunch was tall, angular Dornhoefer. "Gary," said teammate Zeidel, "is a great competitor; a strictly hard-nosed type of guy. He plays hard all the time—in a game and in a scrimmage. Dornhoefer is a defenseman's dream forward because he never stops back-checking and makes life easier for guys like me on the blue line."

As the teams lined up for the start of the 1967-68 race Oakland's Seals were regarded as the West Division's pre-season favorites. They had obtained such accomplished veterans as Bob Baun, Charlie Hodge, Gerry Ehman and Bill Hicke. It appeared that the Seals more than any other expansion team had just the proper balance of power from goal on out.

This theory was confirmed at least on opening night—October 11, 1967—when the Seals defeated Philadelphia, 5-1, in a historic debut at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Arena. Three days later the Flyers were whipped again, this time 4-2 by the Kings in Jack Kent Cook's spanking new Forum in Inglewood, California.

Back on Broad Street, Philadelphians couldn't help wondering whether the Flyers were a latter-day version of the Quakers. Such fears were dispelled on October 18, 1967, in its way the most memorable night in the Flyers' young life. They edged the St. Louis Blues, 2-1, at the St. Louis Arena. Ed Hoekstra, a dark-horse forward who wasn't given much of a chance at making the Flyers' varsity until late in training camp, scored the winning goal.

Philadelphians then had an opportunity to see the Flyers in person for the first time, on October 19, 1967. There were 7,812 spectators in The Spectrum, not exactly a capacity crowd in the 14,558-seat arena.

Gary Dornhoefer reaches for the puck. . .

The Flyers made the night a success by defeating the Pittsburgh Penguins, 1-0. Doug Favell was Philadelphia's goaltender and his shutout was a portent of things to come. Although he had been regarded as the second-best goalie on the team, Favell was beginning to pull ahead of his friendly rival, Bernie Parent, and soon would win the first-string goalie's job although Parent played often and well for the Flyers.

Defeating a West Division foe was not regarded as a monumental accomplishment by NHL observers. They felt that the new expansion teams would have difficulty with the established clubs. There were those who didn't believe that the expansion teams could ever win against the original six. This idea was erased, especially by the Flyers, who routed the New York Rangers, Montreal Canadiens, Boston Bruins and Detroit Red Wings before the 1967-68 season was two months old.

By the start of 1968 it was evident that the Flyers were a team to be taken seriously by all. They were head-to-head with the Los Angeles Kings in what developed into a fierce battle to the wire for first place and the Clarence Campbell Bowl. In a home-and-home series with the Kings on December 30 and December 31, first at The Spectrum and then at The Forum, the Flyers blanked their West Coast rivals, 2-0, in Philadelphia and then, 9-1 in California.

Not only were the Flyers winning games, they were winning fans as well. Goalie Favell was confounding opponents with a style that, to put it mildly, was indescribably wild. Manager Bud Poile, was asked to describe Favell's mode of goaltending. "He has none," said the boss.

What gave Favell star quality was not only his spectacular assortment of kicks, jumps, dives and splits but also his pugnacity, rather unusual for goaltenders who usually have enough on their hands keeping pucks out of the net. Favell couldn't have cared less about tradition; otherwise he wouldn't have done what he did one night to one of the most petulant of skaters, Reg Fleming of the Rangers.



Bernie Parent makes a stick save against the Montreal Canadiens.



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Veteran Flyer defenseman Ed Van Impe evicts a Ranger from the Philadelphia goal crease.

On opening day of the new Madison Square Garden, Doug thought Fleming was guilty of reckless driving and immediately galumphed after the Ranger; which wasn't easy since Favell was burdened with 40 pounds of goal pads and cumbersome gloves.

Although teammates tried to persuade Doug that his place was in the nets, he sprayed punches at Fleming until a linesman intervened and tackled the effervescent Flyer to the ice.

This apparently didn't bother Favell. He somehow launched a right cross that caught Fleming on the cheek and the bout was over; that fast!

Another time Doug went after three members of the Los Angeles Kings during a brawl at The Spectrum.

Coach Allen was clever enough to exploit the Favell-Parent rivalry as much as possible, to help the team. "Because of Doug," Parent admitted, "this is the first year that I really worked hard. When your partner is down around two goals-against, you've gotta do something to keep your job."

By mid season Favell and Parent were leading in the Vezina Trophy competition for the club with the lowest goals-against average. Favell was also in a brisk race with Boston's Derek Sanderson for the Rookie of the Year award.

Favell's bizarre attitude toward goaltending in particular and hockey in general symbolized the crazy first season alternately enjoyed and suffered by the Flyers as a team. How Doug managed to keep the Flyers in first place, considering his training habits, remained a mystery to followers of the team.

While Parent would worry himself into exhaustion, Favell would take the games with an air bordering on militant frivolity. Less than 20 minutes before the game, at a time when veteran goalies such as St. Louis' Glenn Hall were known to vomit with nervousness, Favell would phlegmatically down a pizza and a Coke.

"He has," said coach Allen, "an alarming nonchalance."

Putting up with Favell's nuttiness was easier for the Flyers than dealing with the crazy developments that befell their brand new rink, The Spectrum.

Shared by @RockyMagazine

Dave Schultz is restrained by officials.

Philadelphiaans were glowing over their new major-league hockey team which appeared to be a sure first-place finisher, as the Flyers entered the homestretch, when The Spectrum managed to louse things up.

Disaster struck in February 1968 during a windstorm that gripped the city. A fierce gust blew over Broad Street and managed to rip a gaping hole in The Spectrum's roof. It was not the kind of damage that could easily be patched and officials ordered the building closed until further notice.

This proved inconvenient for the Flyers who were due to play host to the Oakland Seals on March 3, and very embarrassing for the NHL which was compelled to find another site for the match. Finally, Madison Square Garden was designated as the temporary new "home" of the Flyers.

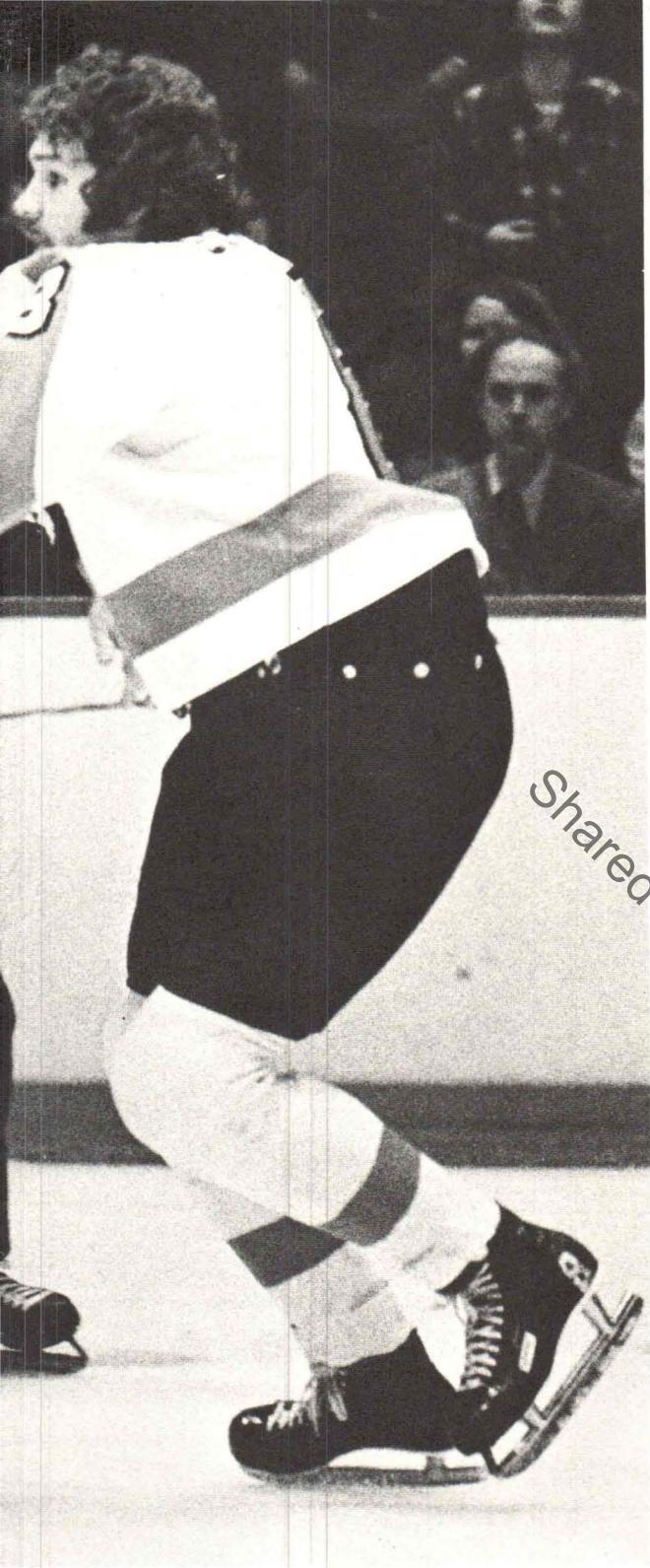
The Flyers trooped to the Manhattan sports palace expecting to be greeted with lusty cheers from the supposedly sympathetic Ranger fans. However, once on the ice they discovered that Philadelphia, for reasons probably best known to New York psychologists, was cast in the villain's role. A majority of the spectators cheered the Seals as heartily as they would have rooted for the Rangers.

Expecting a victory, the Flyers settled for a 1-1 tie.

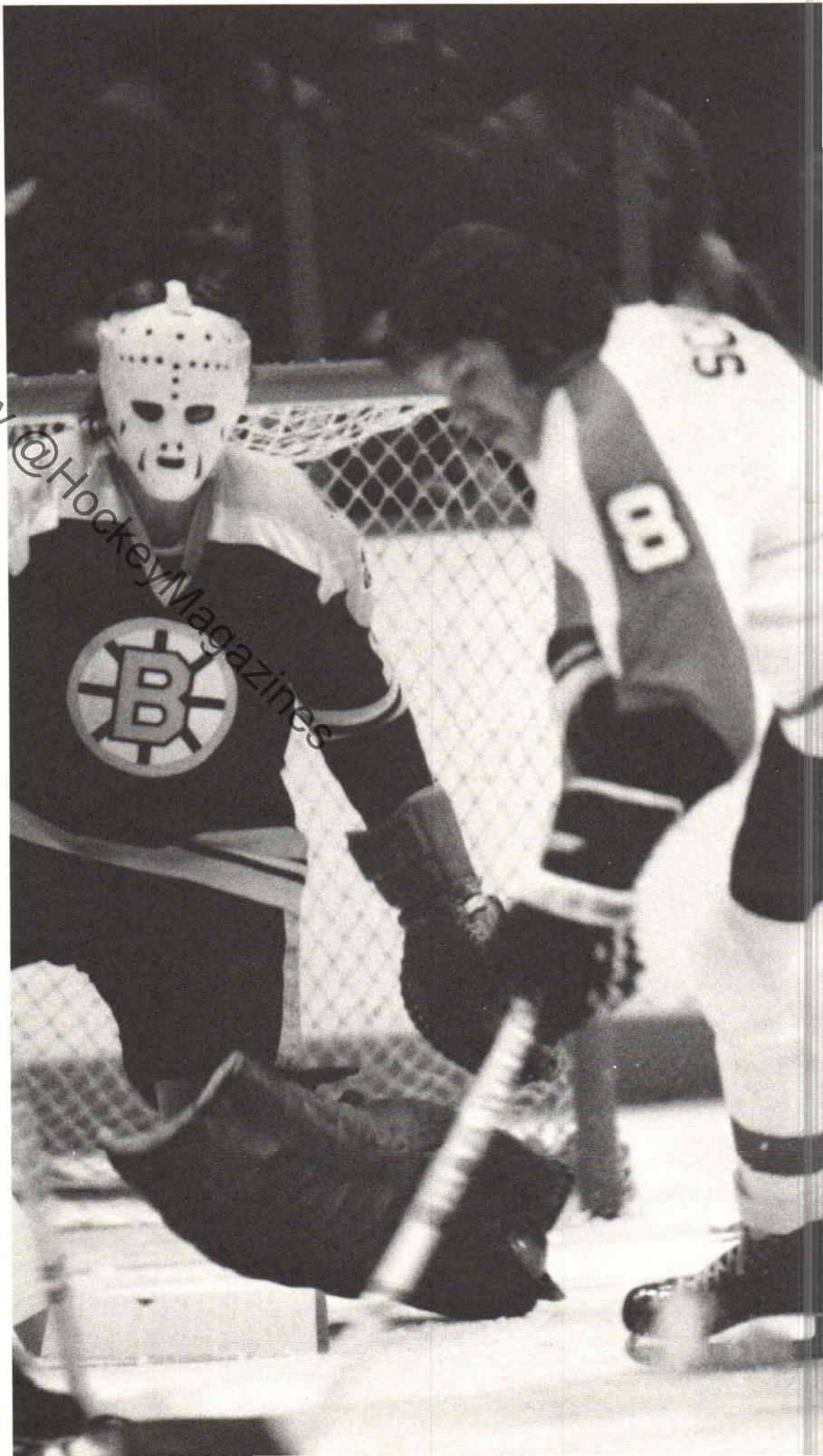
Instead of returning to a repaired Spectrum, the Broad Street skaters learned that the roof had not been fixed with no indication when it *would* be completed. As a result a March 7 game against the Boston Bruins had to be rescheduled for Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto.

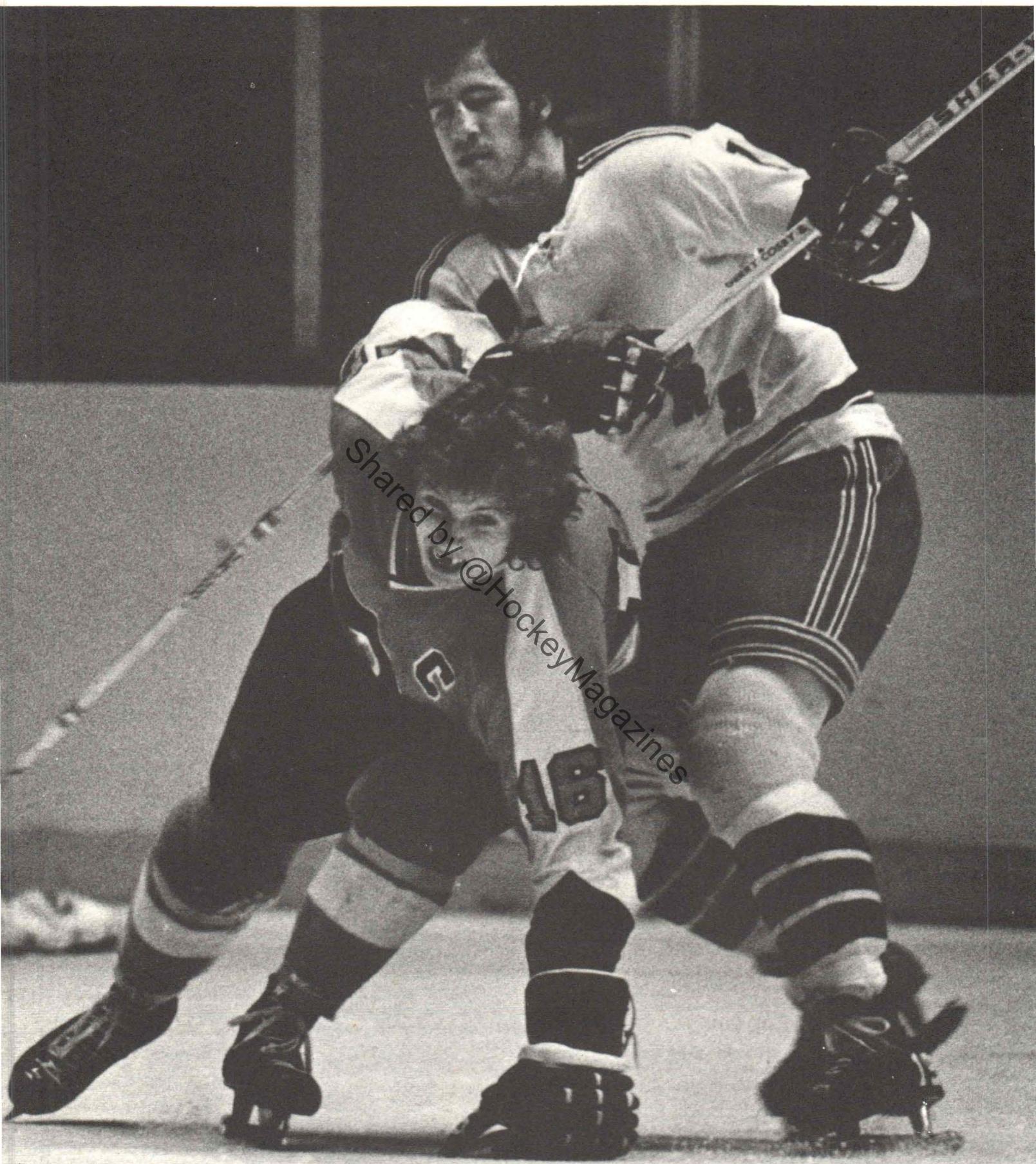
This time the Flyers found a more sympathetic audience but a more hostile opponent. The big, bad Bruins battered Philadelphia's skaters even though the Flyers struck back at every opportunity. A bitter fight erupted; this time between defensemen Larry Zeidel and Eddie Shack of the Bruins. They cut each other sharply with machete-like swings of their sticks and, when calm was restored, were thrown out of the game.





Dave Schultz is usually pictured during a brawl. Here, he is firing the puck at the Boston goal.





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Bobby Clarke blocks out Ranger center Jean Ratelle.

Shared by @HokeyMagazines

Compounding the trouble were charges that the Bruins had been out to "get" Zeidel and that some of the Boston players were less than gentle in alluding to Larry's Jewish ancestry. Both Shack and Zeidel were temporarily suspended by NHL president Clarence Campbell.

Meanwhile, a battle began over the failure to repair The Spectrum. With their tenuous first place lead narrowing, the Flyers had no choice but to play their "home" games on the road and hope that their real home rink would be available by playoff time in April.

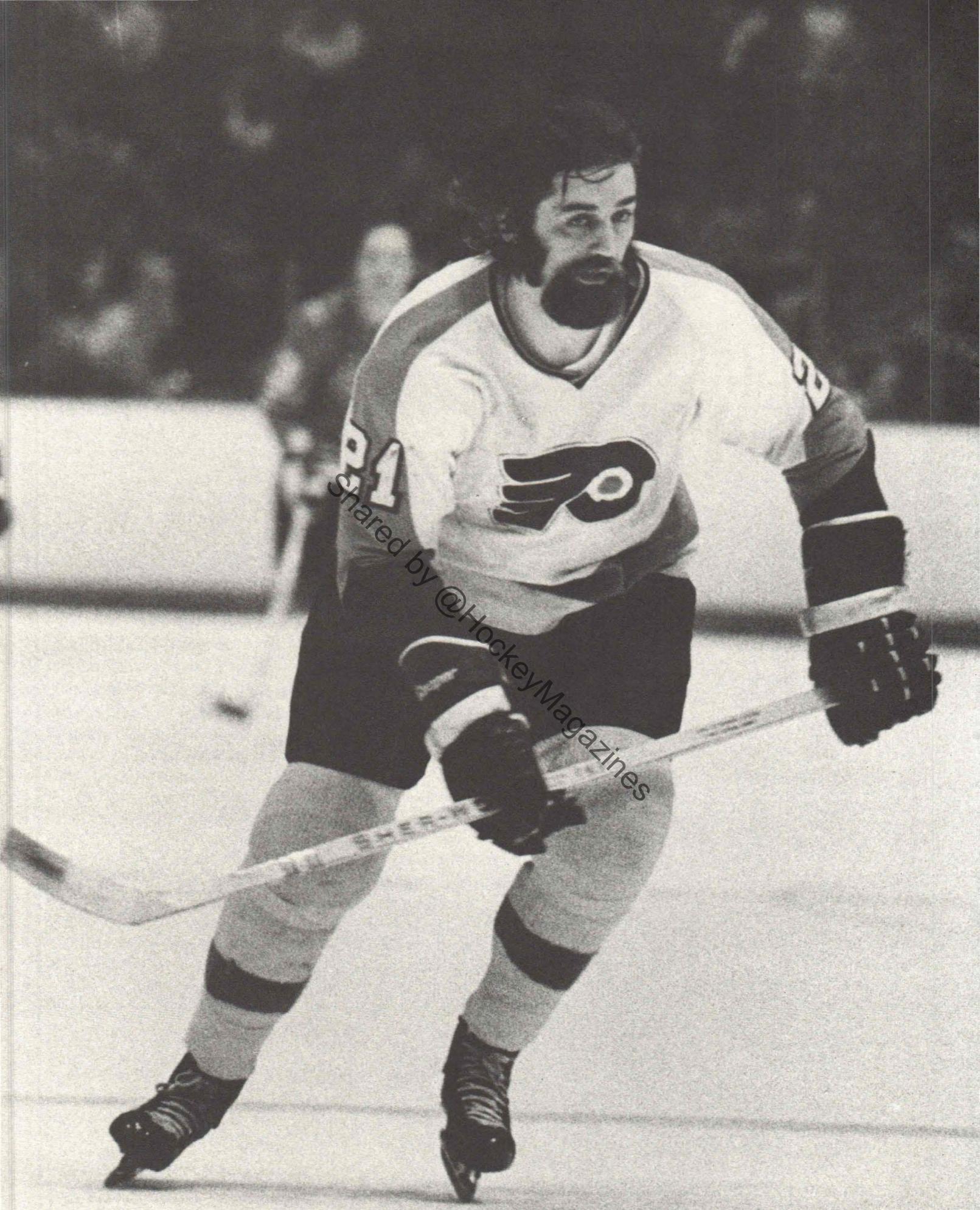
Worrying manager Poile and coach Allen was whether or not the skaters would become despondent or whether they would rally to the challenge and "tough it out" no matter where their "home" games were played. By late March their worries were alleviated. Led by the gallant goaltending of Favell, the Flyers outlasted both Minnesota and Los Angeles and clinched first place in their division on the final weekend of the season. Considering the hardships involved—playing their last 14 games of the season *on the road*—winning the Clarence Campbell (first-place in the West Division) Bowl was in its own way one of the more valorous accomplishments in sports history.

In their first Stanley Cup playoff confrontation, the Flyers skated against the St. Louis Blues, a club which finished in third place but had been coming on strong in the final weeks of the season.

Although favored to win, coach Allen's sextet had been thoroughly exhausted by their travels. They did take the Blues to the seven game limit but lost the final match on April 18, 1968 at The Spectrum, 3–1.

Although a disappointing ending to an otherwise exciting season, it was an indisputable fact that the Flyers had won the hearts of Philadelphians. The growing legion of fans appreciated the gallant march to first place and the histrionics of Favell, Dornhoefer, Parent and Zeidel.

Unlike Benny Leonard's Quakers, the Flyers were here to stay!



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the flyers come of age

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Bearded Bill Flett, known as "Cowboy" was originally drafted by Los Angeles in 1967. Bill came to the Flyers in a trade that also brought Ed Joyal, Jean Potvin and Ross Lonsberry to Philadelphia in exchange for Bill Lesuk, Jim Johnson, and Serge Bernier.

In terms of the Flyers' immediate future, winning the Clarence Campbell Bowl in March 1968 proved to be misleading. More championships were not immediately forthcoming. From a position of eminence, the Flyers fell to a just average level and then utter mediocrity within a space of two seasons. A third-place finish in their second season qualified them for the playoffs once more, to be sure, but their effort against St. Louis was embarrassing.

Philadelphia was beaten, numerically, four games to none, and physically by perhaps 100 stitches to four. It was the intimidation of his skaters that bothered the boss, Ed Snider, more than anything. The Flyers clearly had a smaller team than the Blues. It was then that Philadelphia embarked on a policy of obtaining bigger and tougher skaters.

Trades were made and gambles were taken in the quest for competence, youth and size. One of the most controversial deals saw goalie Parent dealt to Toronto in a complicated trade which brought an unknown kid named Rick MacLeish to The Spectrum. In another, popular little Andre Lacroix was dispatched to Chicago for behemoth defenseman Rick Foley.

Ed Snider realized he might draw the wrath of Flyers' fans in dealing Parent and Lacroix but he believed the good of the team was at stake. He hoped and prayed that the ticket-holders would understand his long-range plans.

They did.

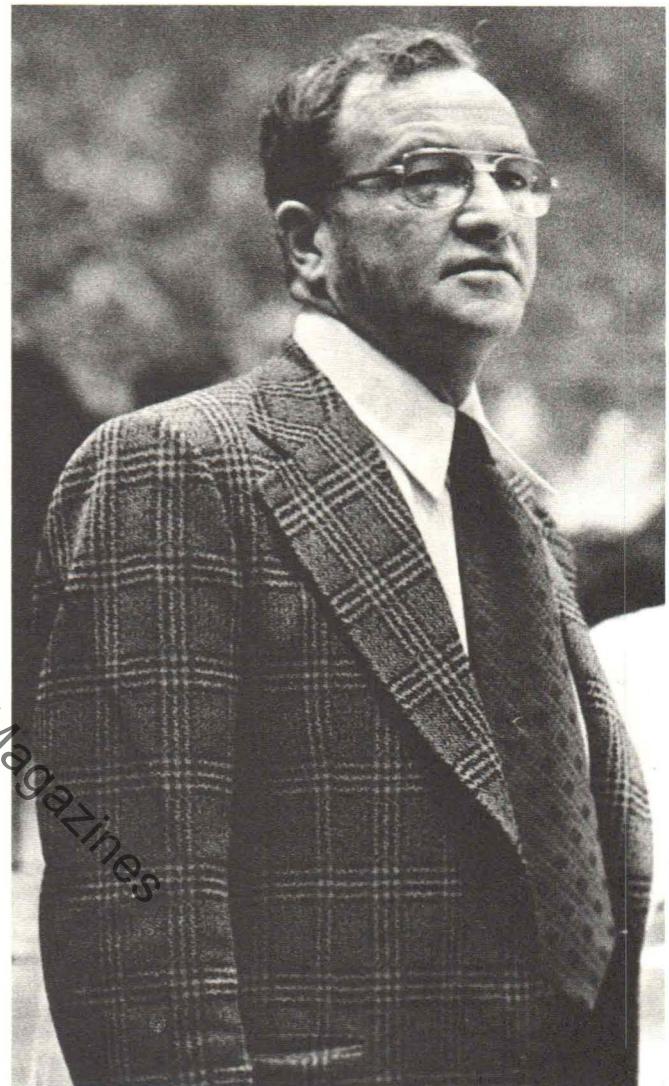
Just as players came and went, so, too, did the front office personnel. By the 1969-70 season club president Putnam had departed. General Manager Reile was released and replaced by coach Keith Allen. The new coach was Vic Stasiuk.

The Flyers finished fifth in 1969-70, third in 1970-71—again they were eliminated from the playoffs in four straight games—and rumblings about Stasiuk's hard-line coaching style causing dissension reached the front office. He was removed in favor of Fred Shero.

It now appeared that board chairman Edward M. Snider had put all the front office pieces into place, and he was quite willing to work overtime to see that the Flyers machine worked smoothly and efficiently. Not having had a hockey background, Snider was occasionally criticized for meddling in the affairs of the team. Snider agreed that his enthusiasm frequently got the better of him but it was all in the interests of the club.

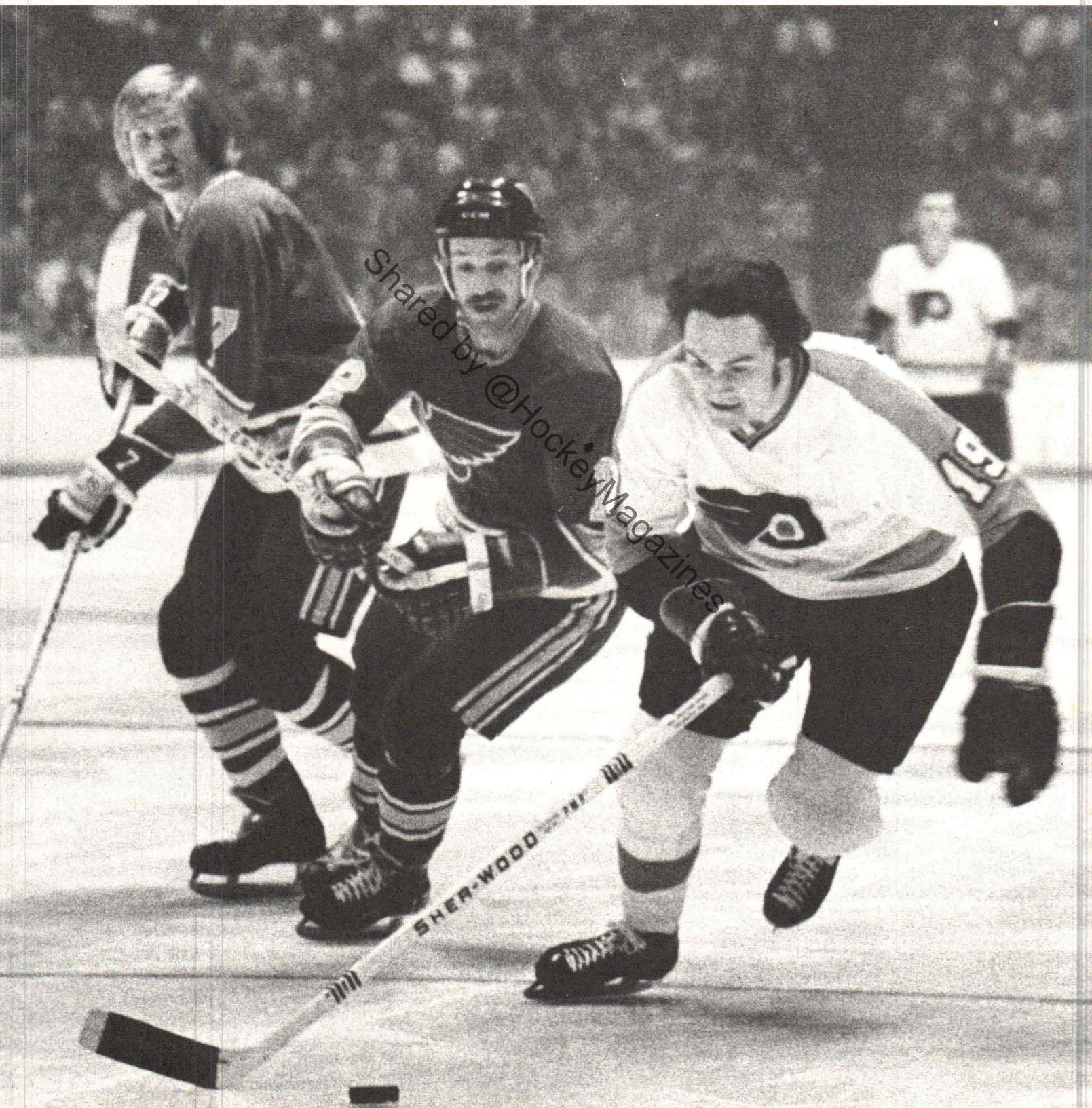
The Allen-Snider combination may have had one failing; a too easygoing approach to their skaters. Snider found it difficult to trade any of his players out of a sense of loyalty. "It eats you up to trade a guy who's given 1000 per cent for you," said Snider.

Fred Shero apparently also had his problems adjusting to the NHL in his rookie coaching year, 1971-72. The Flyers finished fifth, missing the playoffs on a fluke goal in the last game of the season.



Coach Fred Shero, a dominant force behind the Flyers' success.

Rick MacLeish outskates two St. Louis Blues as he carries the puck up ice.



Ed Van Impe retrieves the loose puck in front of goalie Bernie Parent.



The cordial attitude that had been built up during the first four years turned sour in some quarters after the disappointing finish in April 1972. Fan support had reached its high-water mark, but critics in the press had begun to unsheathe their daggers as they had for Philadelphia's losing football and basketball teams. This annoyed Snider and others in the Flyers front office who believed that they were not in the same class as the Eagles and 76ers.

"We're a young team in our sixth year," said Snider. "We haven't been rebuilding—we've been building since the beginning. I can't stand it when we're lumped together with all the losses in this city."

At the beginning of the 1972-73 campaign, only a handful of skaters from the original first-place club of 1967-68 remained. Favell, the goaltender who had suggested so much promise in his career, still was in the Flyers' nets but his overall play was disappointing. A series of freak injuries—he once stepped on a teammate's un-scabbarded blade in the dressing room—had set back his progress. When he did play he usually was very good or very bad.

Defensive holdovers were Ed Van Impe and Joe Watson, the latter a mediocre, but at least experienced backliner. Van Impe, on the other hand, remained a defenseman's defenseman; one of the most respected skaters in the NHL although his calm, often unspectacular play frequently was overlooked by Spectrum fans.

According to opposing forwards, Van Impe's forte is the ability to clear enemy skaters away from the goal crease; sometimes rather violently, occasionally illegally. As a result, Ed finds himself in the midst of a brawl when an opposition player takes exception to his indiscretions.

Of the Philadelphia forwards, only Gary Dornhoefer remained from the original sextet. Despite a series of severe injuries, Gary kept coming back for more and was a welcome member of the squad.

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Since coming to the NHL in 1969 Bobby Clarke has established himself as one of the best face-off men in the game.

The trick, of course, was to build around this nucleus. Which is precisely what Snider and Allen did. Their prize was center Bobby Clarke who joined the team in 1969-70 and matured as a big-leaguer from Day One in the NHL. MacLeish, a disappointment in his early Flyers tryouts, was given another chance. Then, there were the new, or relatively new, faces, counted upon for the major thrust.

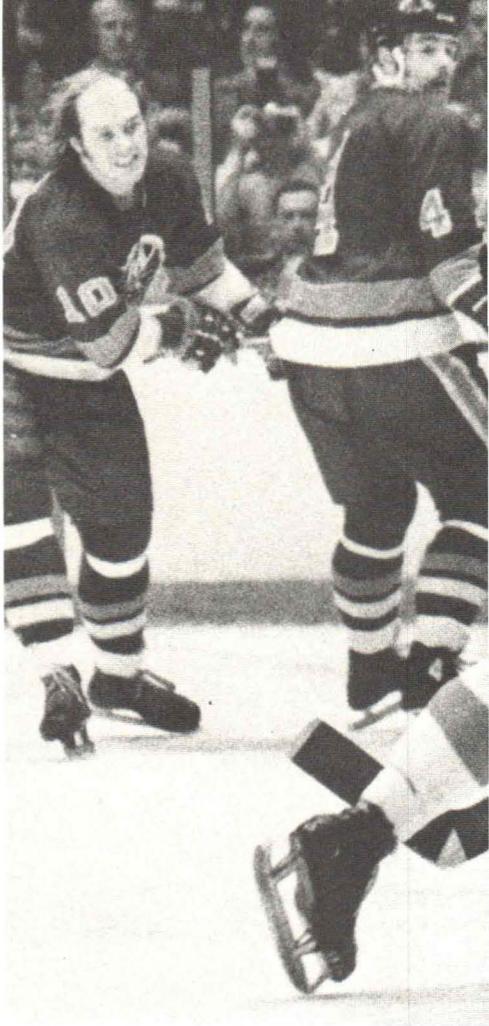
One was Bill Flett, alias "The Cowboy," who had been obtained from Los Angeles in a trade, and the other was Dave Schultz, an articulate, pugnacious minor leaguer who is attracted to trouble the way nails are to magnets. Both were wooed by the World Hockey Association's New York Raiders but rejected the WHA's bid after some uneasy moments at The Spectrum, and signed with Philadelphia.

In addition to Van Impe and Watson, the defense featured Barry Ashbee, Wayne Hillman and Tom Bladon and later would be graced by aggressive Andre Dupont, acquired in a deal with St. Louis.

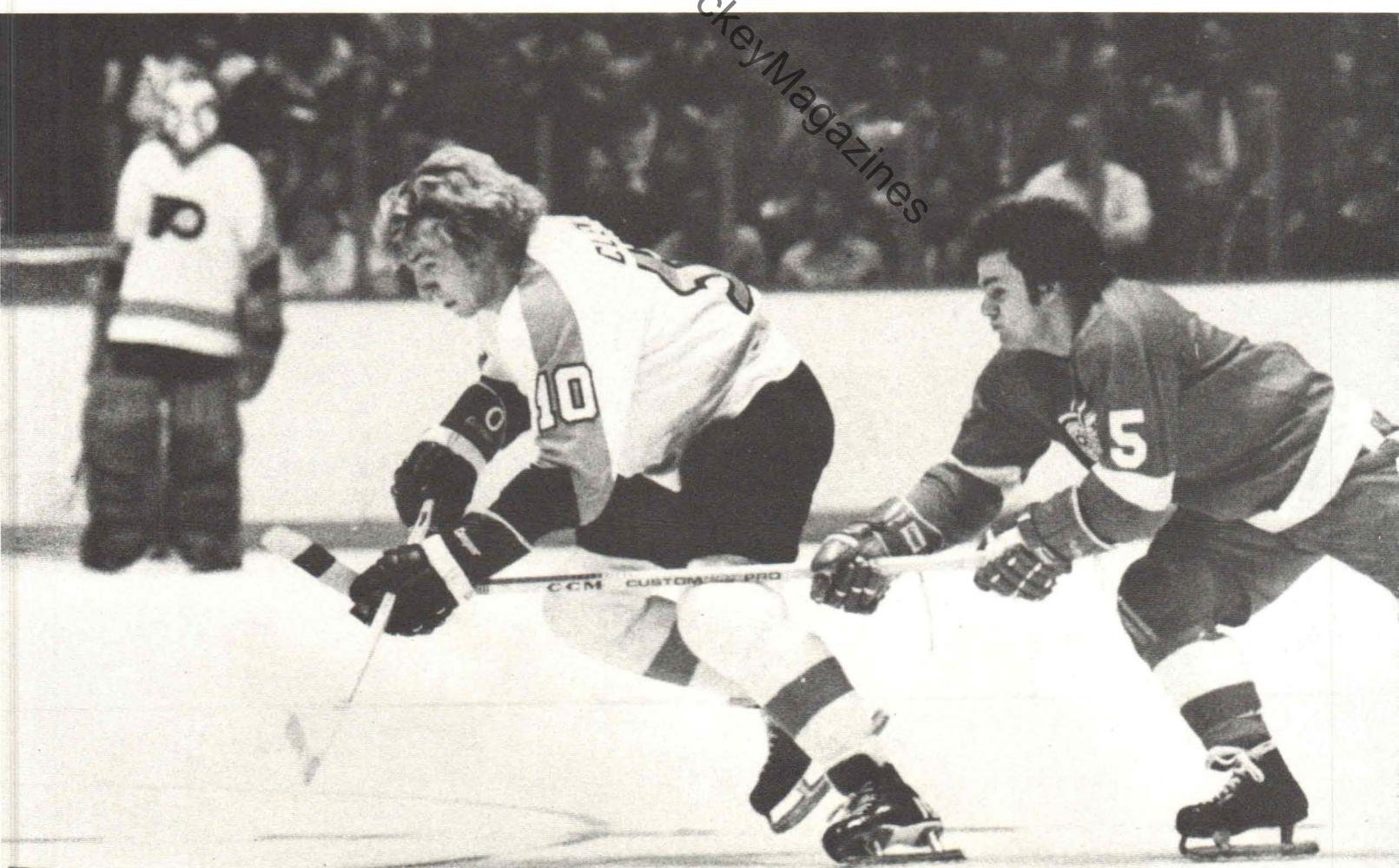
Other husky forwards included Ross Lonsberry, Don Saleski, Bob Kelly, and an unknown rookie named Bill Barber. More than any other NHL team, the Flyers were placing the accent on youth, although it was clear that, through an assortment of deals, some established clubs would be able to accumulate more draft picks than Philadelphia.

Nobody was quite sure just how this effervescent group of skaters would fare in the won-lost column but there was little doubt that they would be the hardest-hitting club Philadelphia ever boasted.

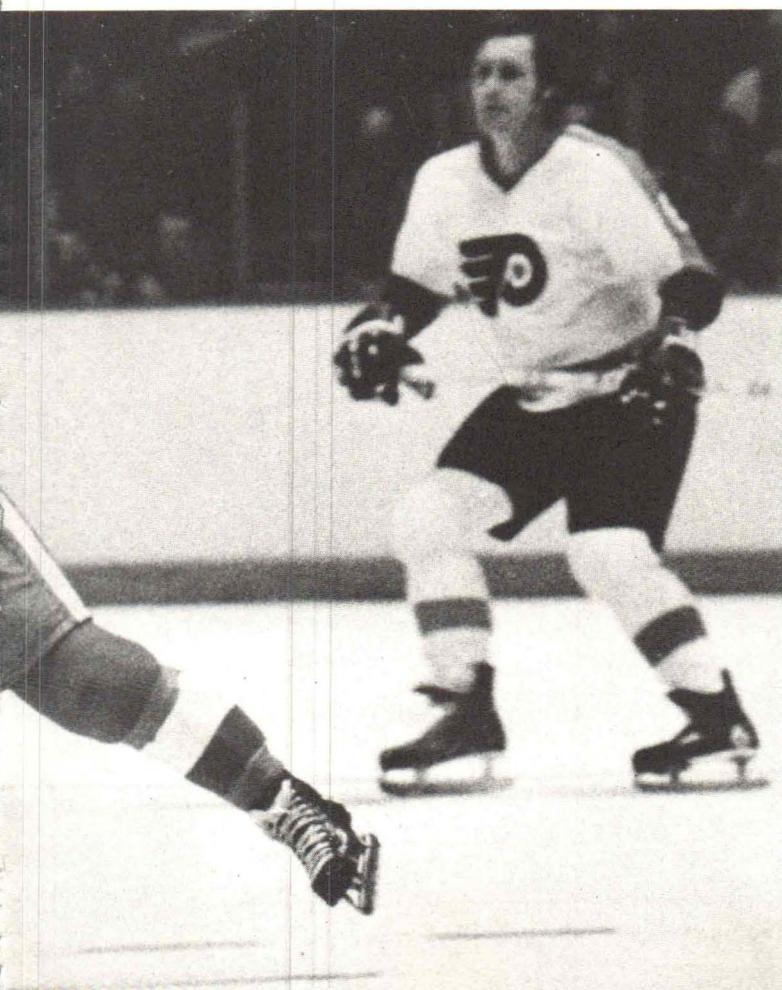
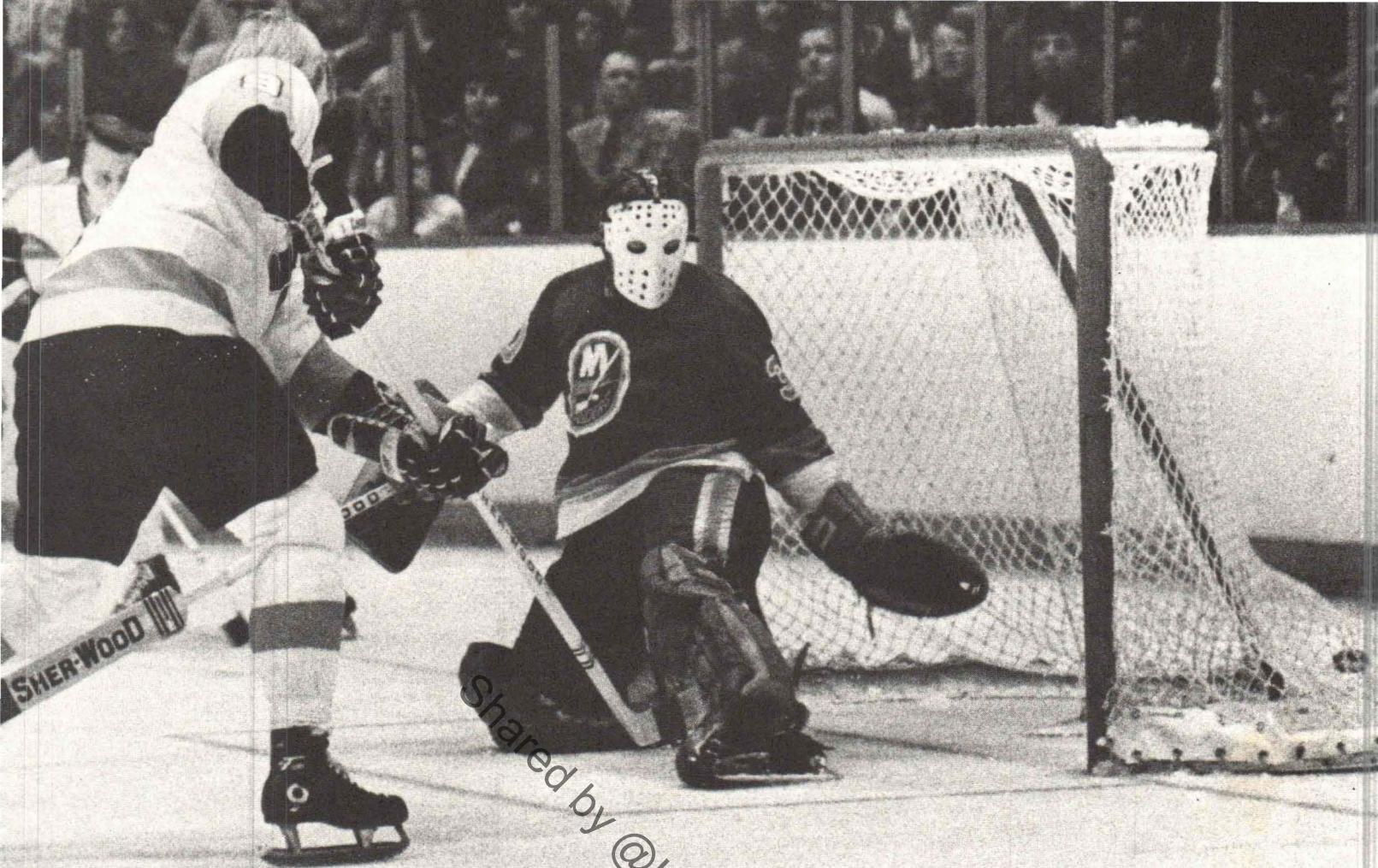
Those players who remained from the earlier teams were tough. Bob Kelly was a perfect example. Once, an elbow in his face knocked him unconscious. He was carried to the infirmary where doctors found he had a broken cheekbone. But that wasn't all. Their examination also disclosed that Kelly had been playing with a nose broken in at least three different places from previous collisions.



*Bob Kelly fires one of his rare goals past
Islander goalie Billy Smith.*



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Marcel Dionne of the Red Wings and Bill Clement pursue the puck.

Rick MacLeish gives the Flyers one of the best 1-2 center combinations in the NHL, playing on a second line behind Bobby Clarke.

"Rough play," said Kelly, "is what this game is all about. You get used to the hitting. If you don't, you shouldn't be here."

Schultz, Saleski, Van Impe, et al. agreed and Snider was very optimistic when 1972-73 began. Of course, the Flyers wanted all the luck they could get; especially since they were facing a challenge from the WHA team in town, The Philadelphia Blazers.

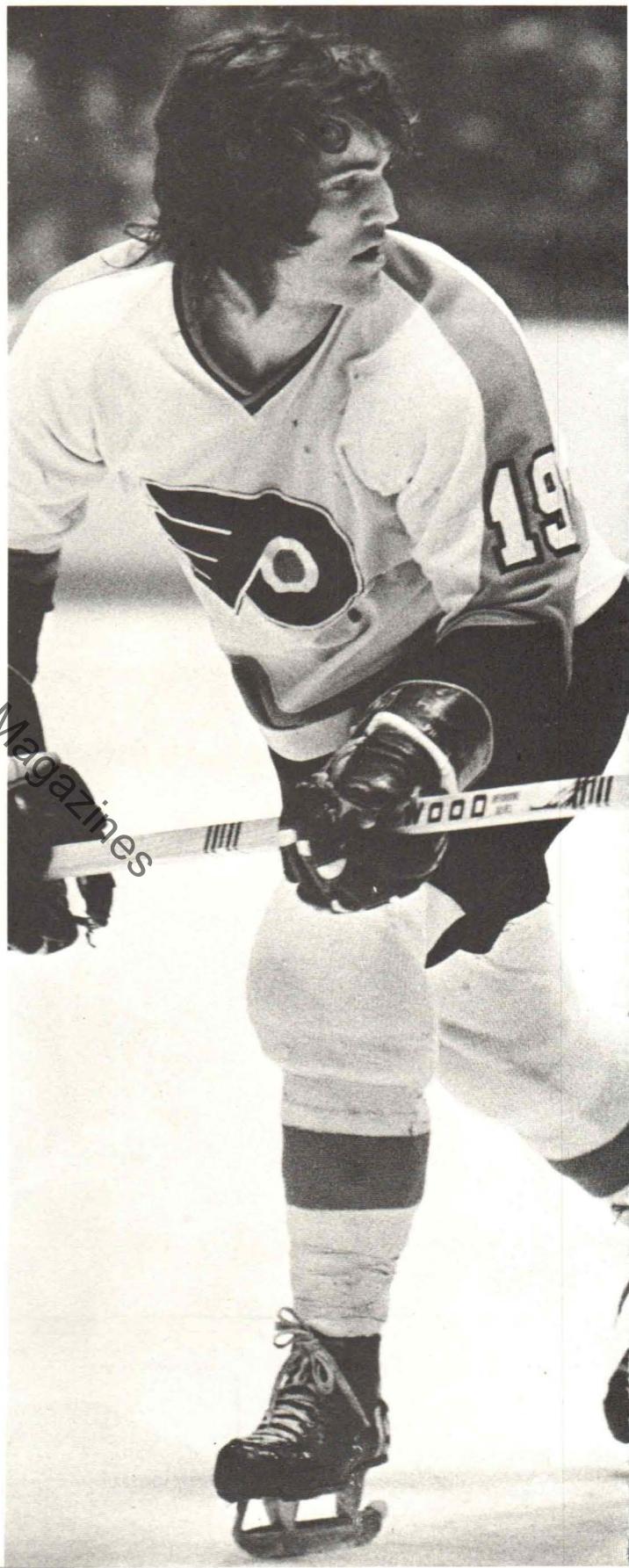
From the time the first puck was dropped, hockey teams have sought ways and means of inducing the ice gods to smile favorably upon them. The Flyers were no exception; except that they believed music held the answer.

Vice president Lou Scheinfeld, a former newspaperman who became Snider's *aide de camp*, idea man and chief administrator of The Spectrum, along with his boss, got a brainstorm one night a few years ago about music's place in the good luck scheme of the team.

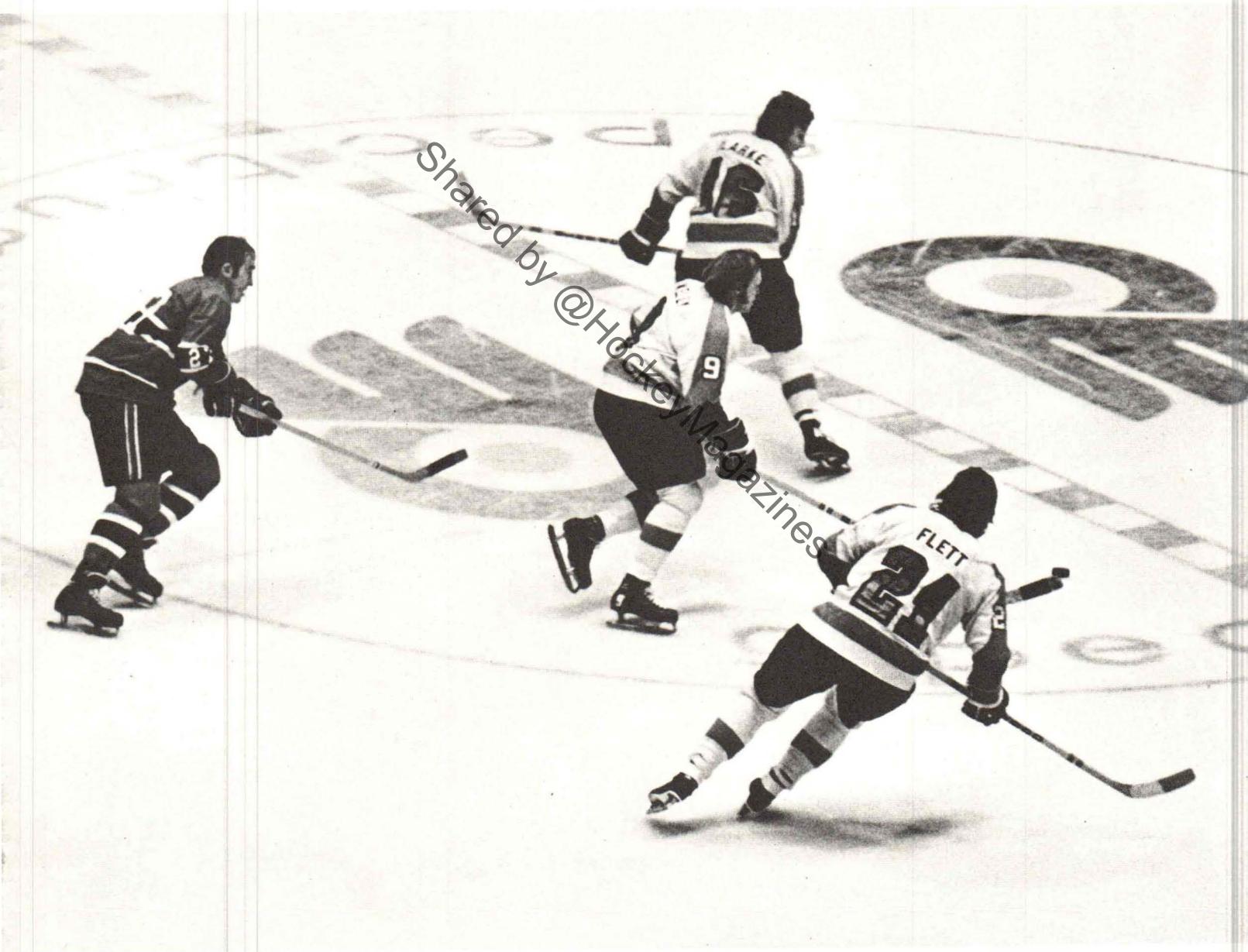
"I looked around The Spectrum one night," said Scheinfeld, "when they played the national anthem and I saw that hardly anybody was singing. It's a hell of a way to get a crowd going. So I suggested to Ed that we play something people could sing along with better, like 'God Bless America.' Ed agreed, everybody sang and we won the game. From then on he would play Kate Smith sparingly. And, damn it, just about every time he plays her we win."

Everybody agreed that it would take more than Kate Smith, God Bless America and a gross of rabbits' feet to lift the Flyers into a playoff spot during 1972-73. What was required was a distillation of guts, goals and glamour.

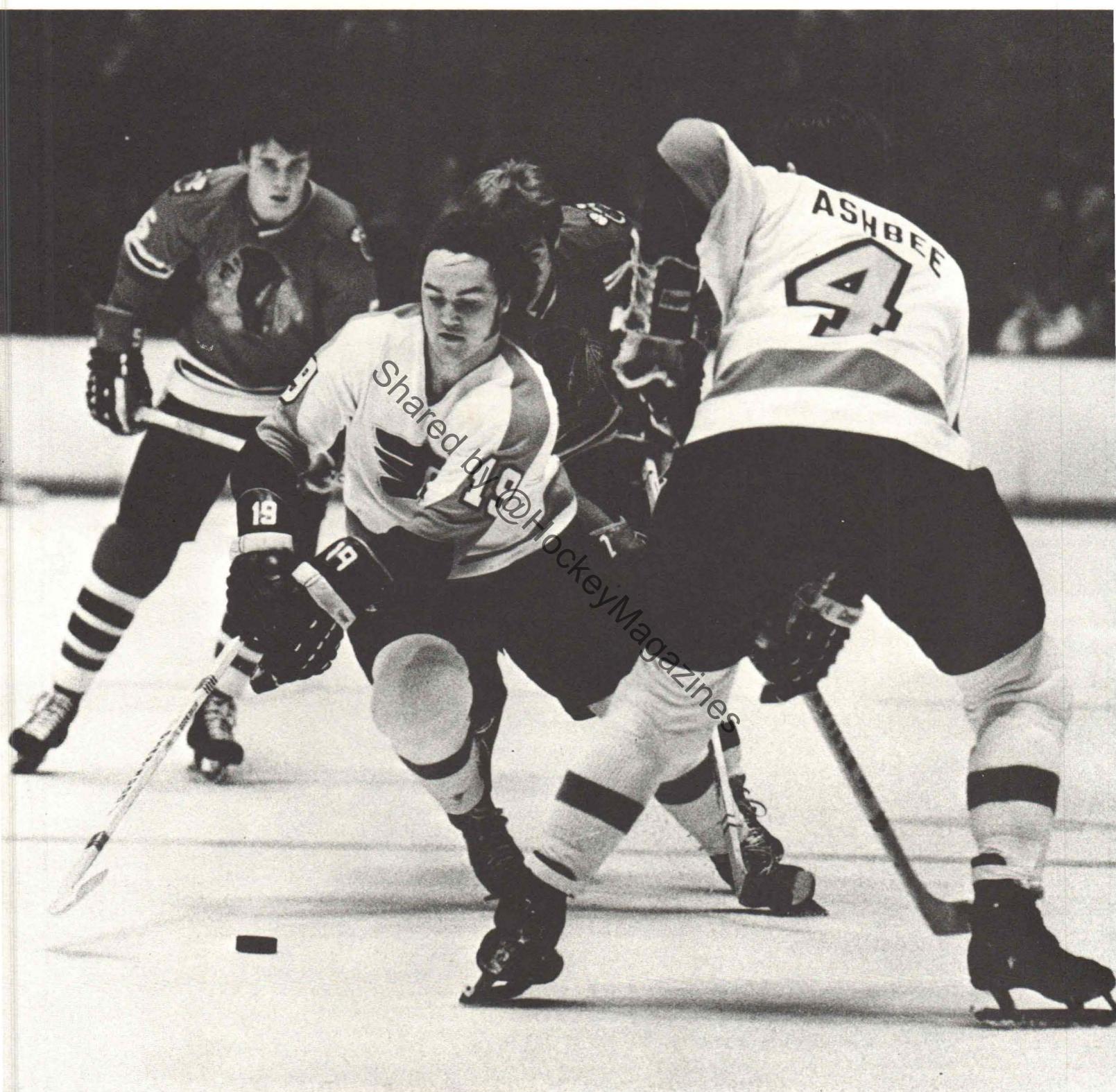
It would be up to coach Fred Shero to supply the wizardry to make the formula work.

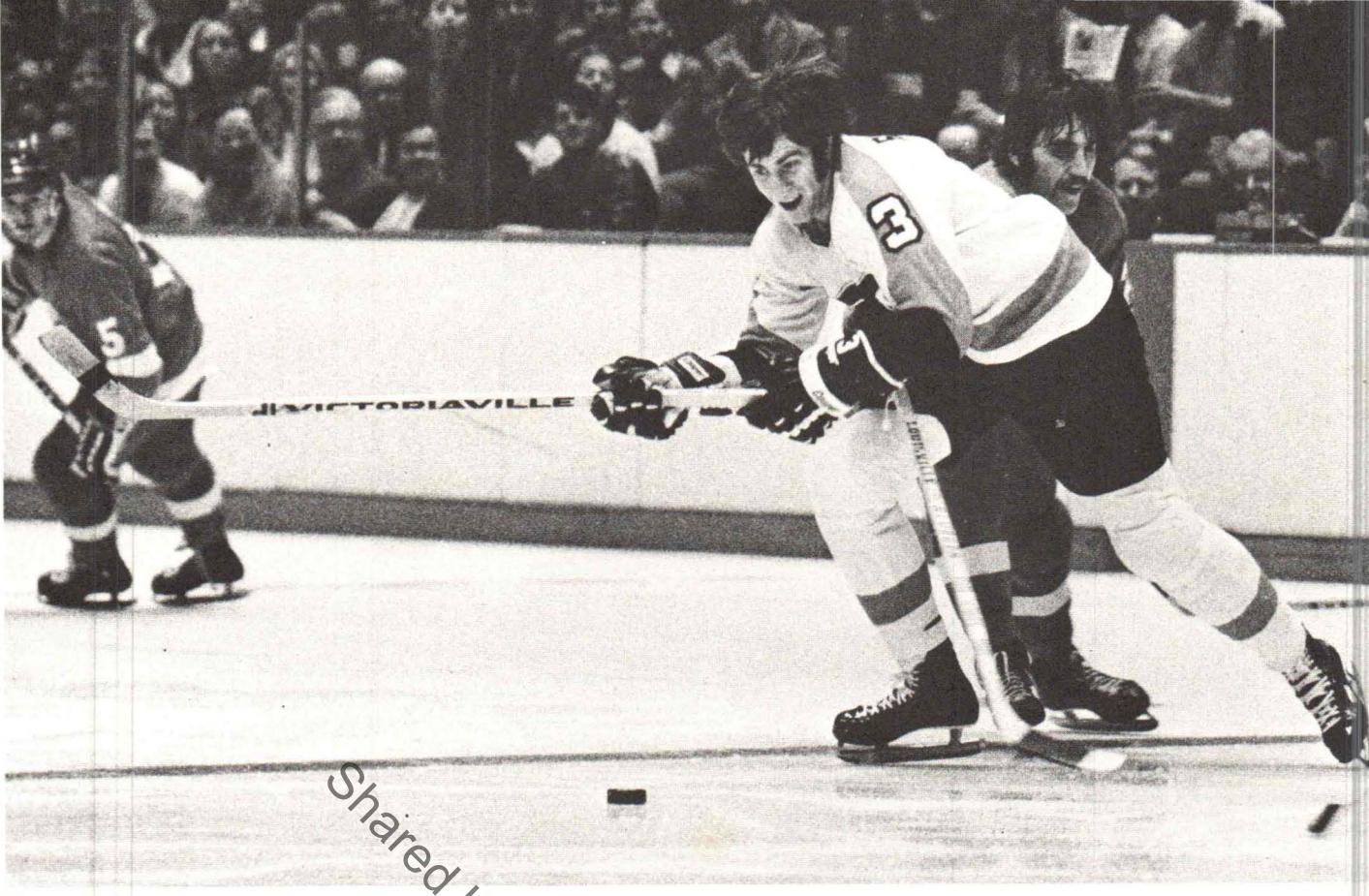


Bob Kelly (9) brings the puck up ice against Montreal. Bobby Clarke and Bill Flett assume wing positions.



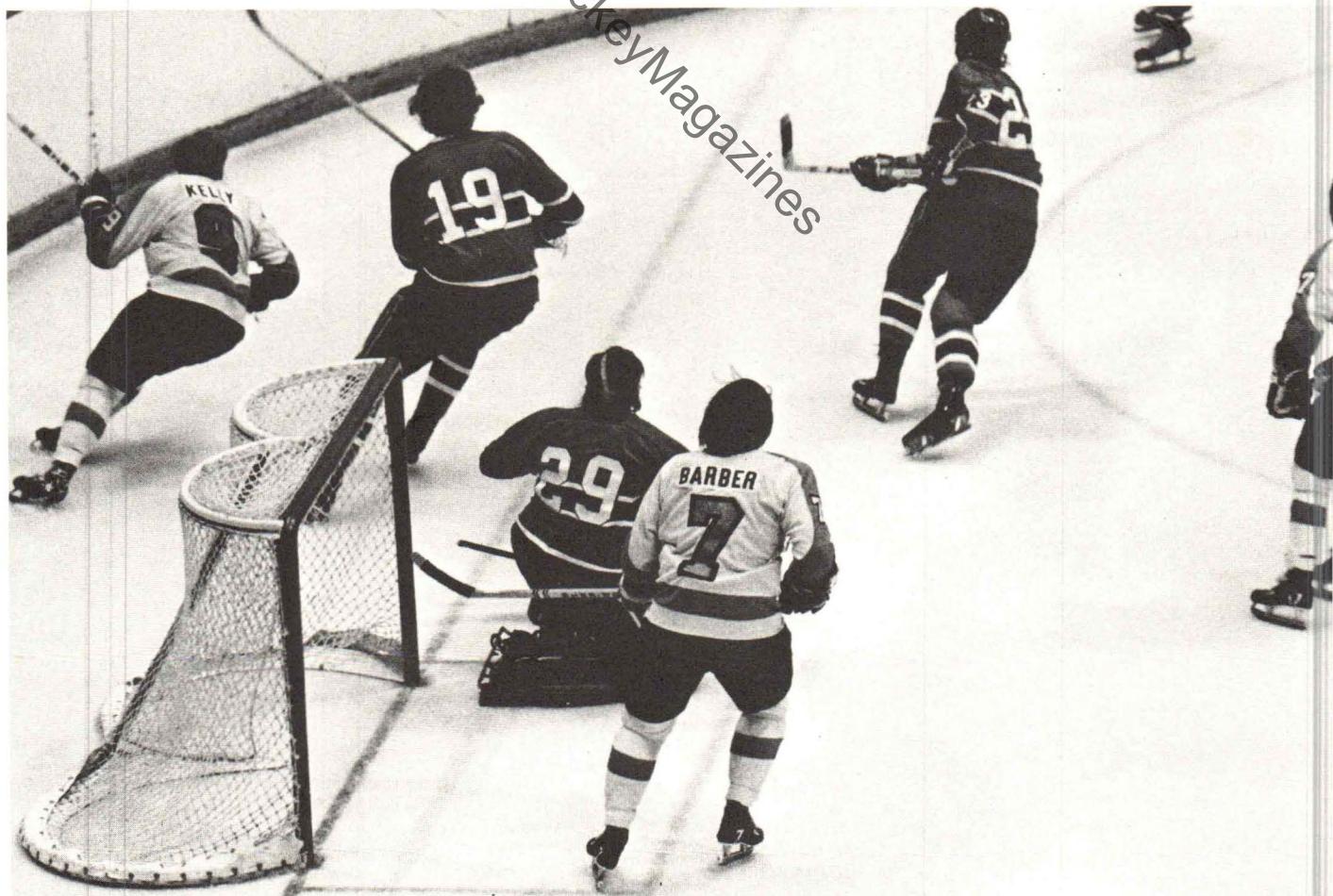
*Rick MacLeish takes control of the puck
and prepares to launch a drive against
Chicago.*





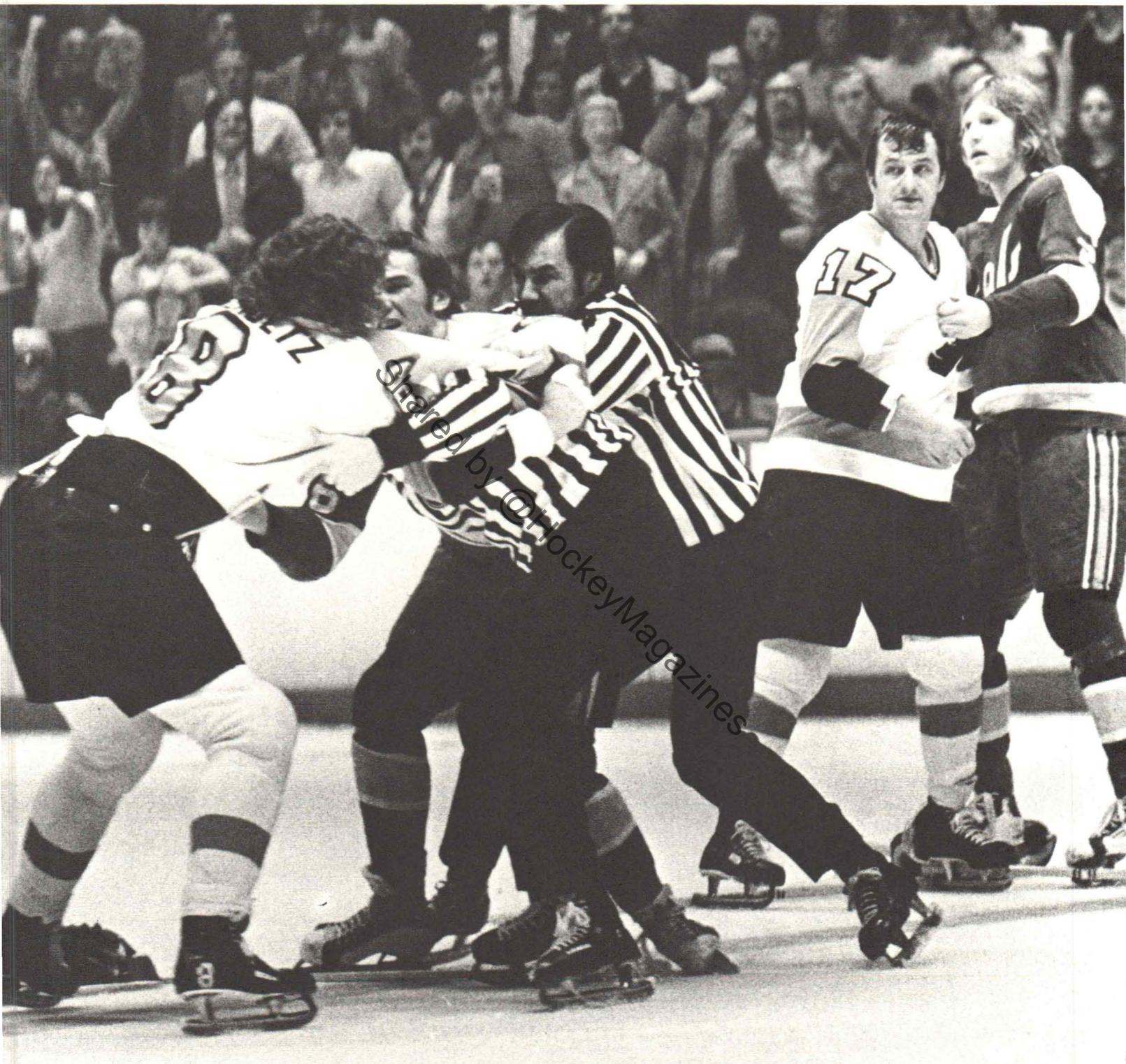
Tom Bladon is a reserve Flyer defense-man who came up with the Edmonton Oil Kings of Junior hockey.

Flyers and Canadiens after the puck.



Shared by  @HockeyMagazines

Dave Schultz and California's Marshall Johnston (2) are separated by Simon Nolet (17) and NHL officials during a game in Philadelphia.



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guts, goals and glamour

shared by @HockeyMagazines

Riveted in the mind of Flyers' chairman Ed Snider was the humiliation suffered by his team at the hands—and fists—of the St. Louis Blues during the 1969 Stanley Cup playoffs. Snider vowed that he would avenge that shellacking and build a strong team that wouldn't back away from any opponent be it the Blues or the Big, Bad Bruins; and one that would be productive in the most artistic sense of the word and attractive to purists, brand-new fans, and men and women alike; not to mention the kids.

The 1972–73 Flyers' model had just the right blend of guts, goals and glamour. They were alternately known as The Mean Machine, The Broad Street Bullies and The Ferocious Flyers. Whatever the label, it was accurate if it suggested vim, vigor and vitality.

"We're a big club," said coach Fred Shero, "and hitting is a big part of our game."

Dave Schultz, Andre Dupont, Bob Kelly, Gary Dornhoefer and Don Saleski, were among the more notorious, and flamboyant belters, but there were others more subtle but no less aggressive. Defenseman Ed Van Impe was as rough as anyone but accumulated fewer penalties. Up front Bobby Clarke, Bill Flett and Rick MacLeish never seemed reluctant to trade body checks or, as the situation warranted, elbows and high sticks.

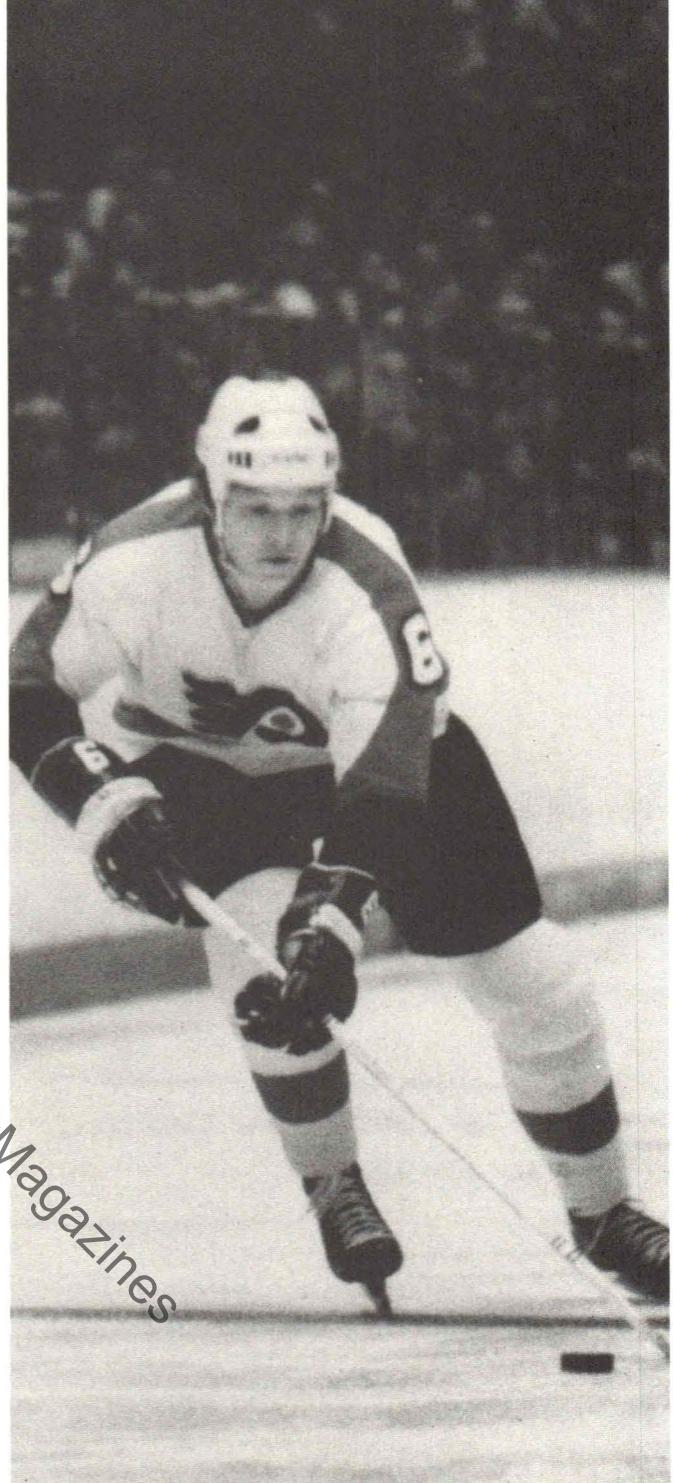
The Flyers as a group, had become a skating demolition derby. They made no secret of it, nor were they discriminating about it either. When they played a big, powerful club like the New York Rangers, they crunched enemy bodies just as hard, if not harder, than when they played weaker clubs such as the Canucks. This was team policy as articulated by coach Shero.

"You've got to hit hard," said Shero, "and keep hitting hard and use lots of muscle to beat a team that skates and passes and shoots the puck as well as the Rangers do."

Shero made the comment prior to a game at Madison Square Garden which the Flyers tied, 2-2, and which featured attempts by two of the more aggressive New Yorkers, Glen Sather and Gene Carr, to defuse the Flyers. "Someone on the other team thinks he's tougher than us," said Bill Flett, "and then things happen."

What happened, as usual, was that the opponents wound up on their rumps. Schultz boxed Sather's ears while Kelly scored what amounted to a TKO over Carr. The Rangers, who liked to think they play a tough game, grudgingly allowed that the Flyers were something else. "They (the Flyers) go around like King Kong on an ego trip," said Rangers bruiser Ted Irvine.

Sather put it another way: "I checked Schultz into the boards. Then I stood there and he hit me. It was a good punch—give him credit. If I was scoring the fight, he won 10-0!"



Andre Dupont noted for his aggressiveness, skates into enemy territory.

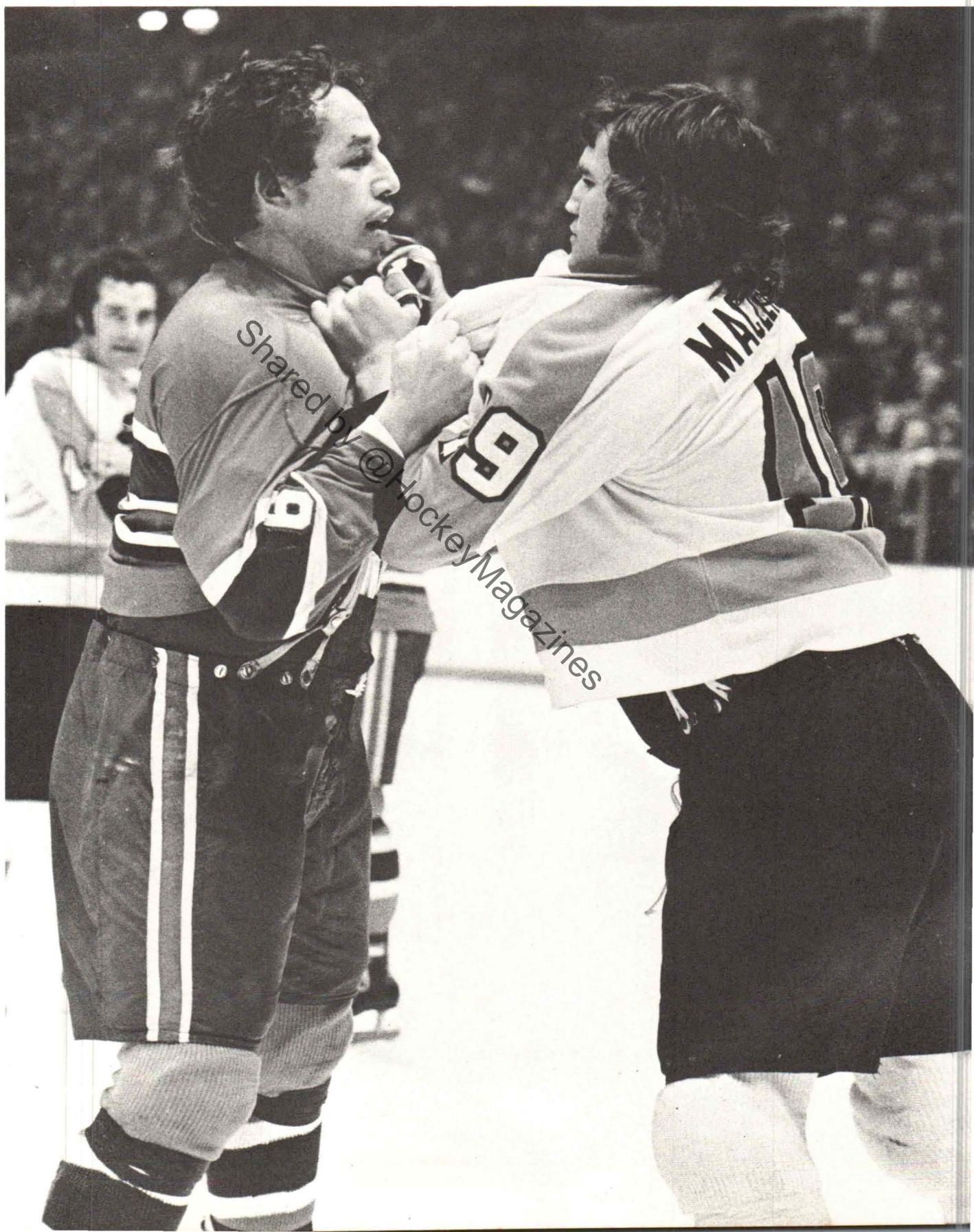
Right wing Don Saleski in front of the Red Wings' net.

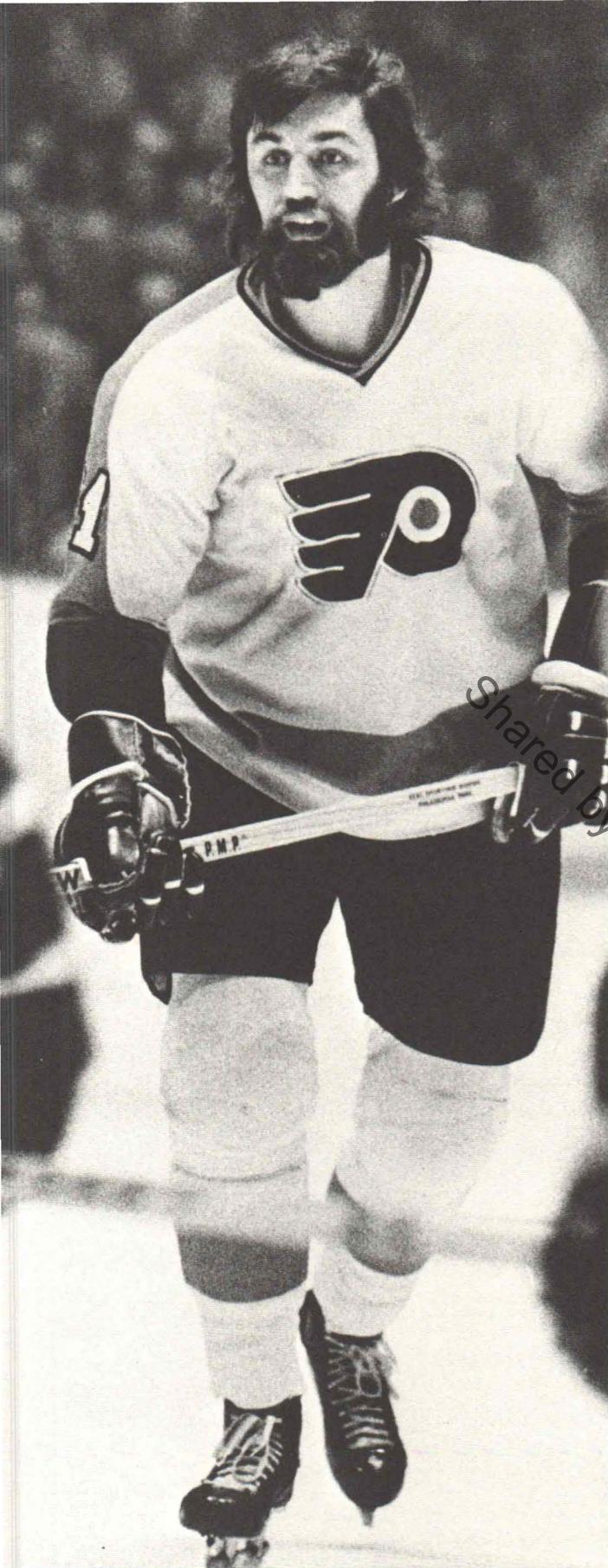


*Bill Flett leaps over the Detroit goalie for
a better position in front of the net.*

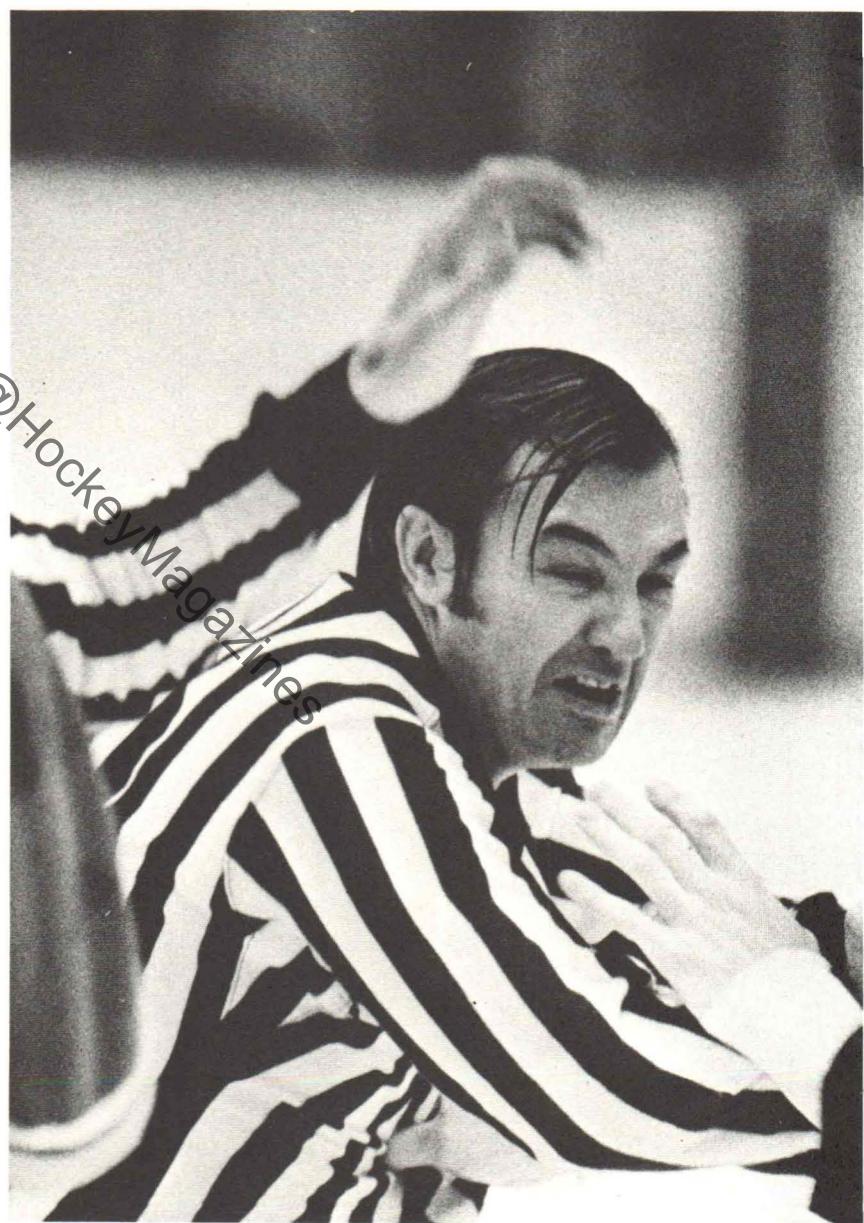


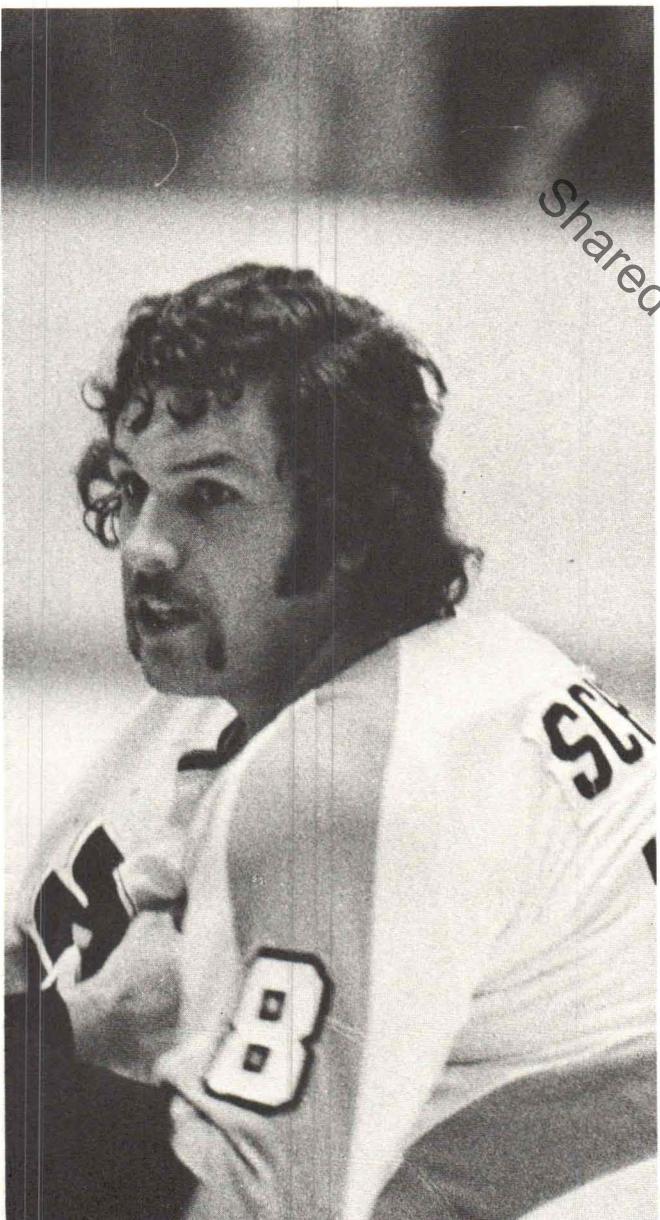
Rick MacLeish and Montreal's Jim Roberts have words during a contest in Philadelphia.





Bill Flett proved to be a productive goal scorer when he was with the Flyers. He recorded 71 goals and 68 assists over two and a half seasons.





Dave Schultz ferociously eyes a fellow brawler after another flareup at the Spectrum.

The Flyers also had won a reputation by late Winter 1972-73 as the roughest, toughest team on ice, supplanting the formerly burly Bruins. By March 7, 1973 Schultz led the NHL with 186 penalty minutes, 14 of which were majors and seven misconducts. He was followed by Dupont (178), Kelly (173), Dornhoefer (150), and Saleski (147). The season wasn't even over and the Flyers still managed to have five skaters with more than 100 minutes in penalties!

In the eyes of many experts, coach Shero was the hero because he developed a club which had scoring punch as well. By mid-March 1973, the Flyers had scored nearly 100 goals more than the previous season.

Occasionally, the Flyers would take a lighthearted approach to their two-fisted image. Once, on a flight from Los Angeles to Vancouver, two Vancouverites approached Shero and asked whether his so-called "Mad Squad" signed autographs. "No," snapped the coach in mock seriousness, "they just punch people."

Defenseman Dupont explained that he felt like an alien for a few weeks after being traded from the St. Louis Blues to the Flyers. "Then," said Dupont, "I had a fight with Dennis Kearns in Vancouver and I began to feel accepted."

The guts of the Flyers was frequently evident. In a late-season game at The Spectrum, St. Louis enforcer Steve Durbano swung his stick at a Philadelphia trainer. Moments later Durbano was pummelled to the ice by the Flyers and left the game a considerably tamer stickhandler.

With the guts came goals from aces such as Rick MacLeish who reached the coveted 50-goal mark by season's end. Then there was 43-goal Flett, the only bearded skater in the NHL who added glamour (he was voted one of the sexiest Flyers) to the Mad Squad.

Guts, goals and glamour. The combination obviously worked; and nothing said it better than a headline in the Philadelphia Daily News:

"FLYERS' MAD SQUAD NOW SECOND."

That's where they finished; but up and down Broad Street, across Market and out on the Main Line, into the suburbs, they were first in the hearts of Philadelphians.



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Sticks and gloves are sprawled on the ice as Moose Dupont takes on a New York Islander.

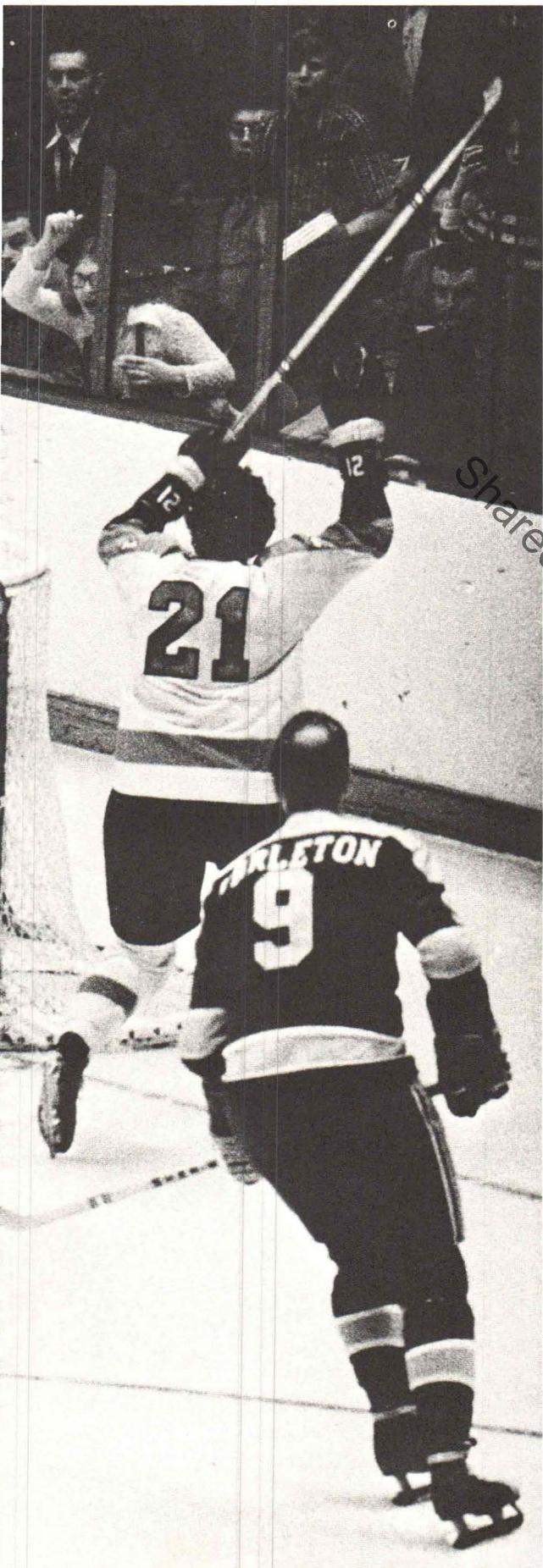


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Bill Flett raises his stick in triumph after scoring against the California Golden Seals.



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year of victory

While the Philadelphia Flyers finished the 1972-73 season with a respectable record, had gained a playoff berth and had reached the second round of the Stanley Cup playoffs, commendable though it was, it was not enough. To attain the kind of respect that an established NHL team earns, the Flyers realized that they had to reach two objectives—finish first in the West Division and win the Stanley Cup.

Their first objective was immensely aided by the return of goalie Bernie Parent. With the agile French-Canadian guarding the nets, the Flyers discovered a formula for victory—Parent's hands and everyone else's fists. Coach Fred Shero's warriors battled their way to the top of the West Division in November 1973. In 12 games, the amazing Parent had five shutouts. He allowed only 15 goals in those games for a league-leading 1.25 goals against average.

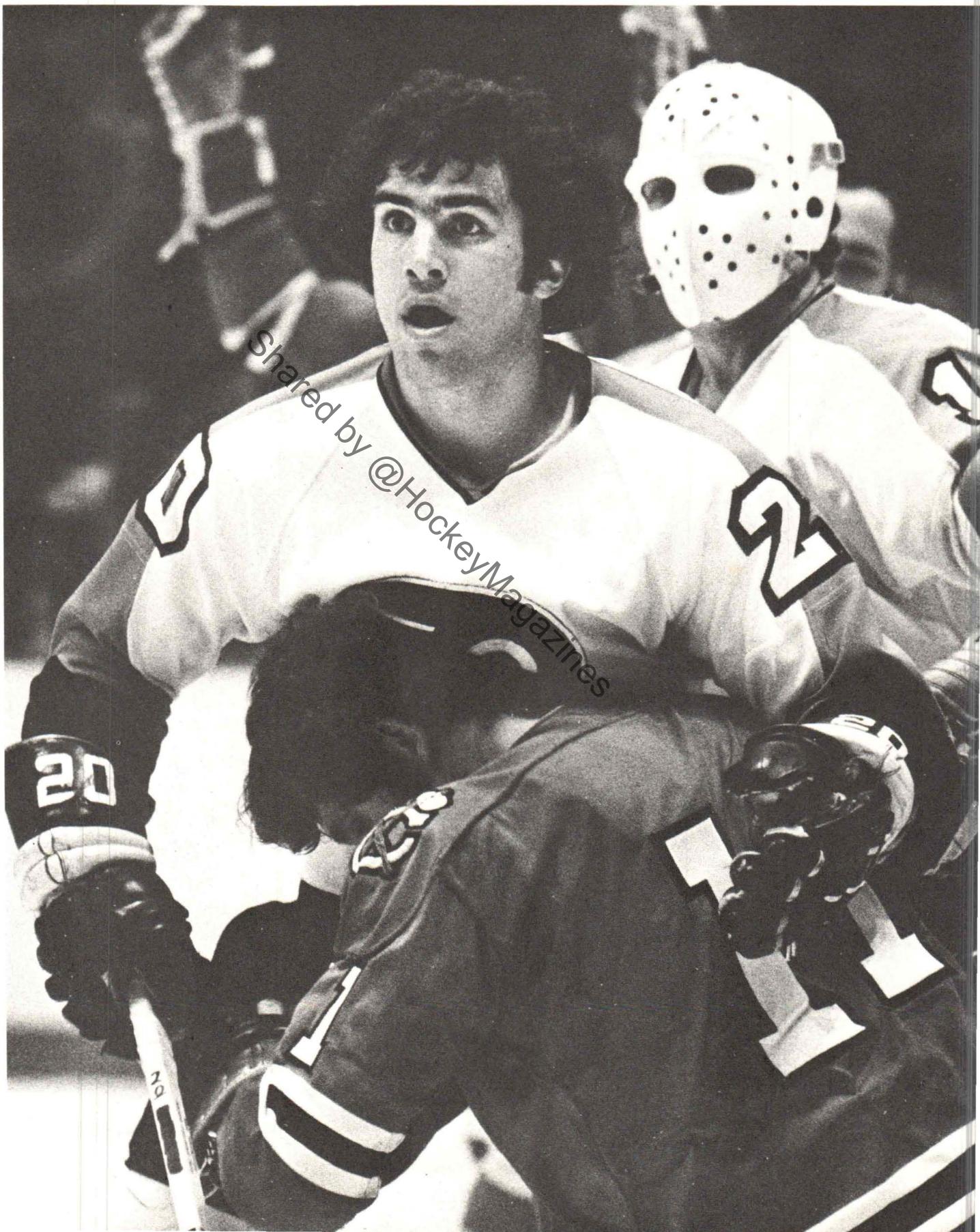
By the end of November, the Flyers were still on top with the Black Hawks in close pursuit. But Philadelphia had a command about themselves never before seen on Spectrum ice. Shero and his aide, Mike Nykoluk, seemed to have infused the skaters with new confidence.

The maturing of Rick MacLeish, the addition of young backliner Jim Watson, and rookie forward Orest Kindrachuk all made a difference. "We've got more balance in the organization," said Shero. "We've got depth. We can reach back to our Richmond farm club and get replacements. The guys on the big club know it, so they

Orest Kindrachuk is one of hockey's most underrated centers. He proved to be a big thorn in the side of the Rangers during the 1974 Stanley Cup semi-finals.

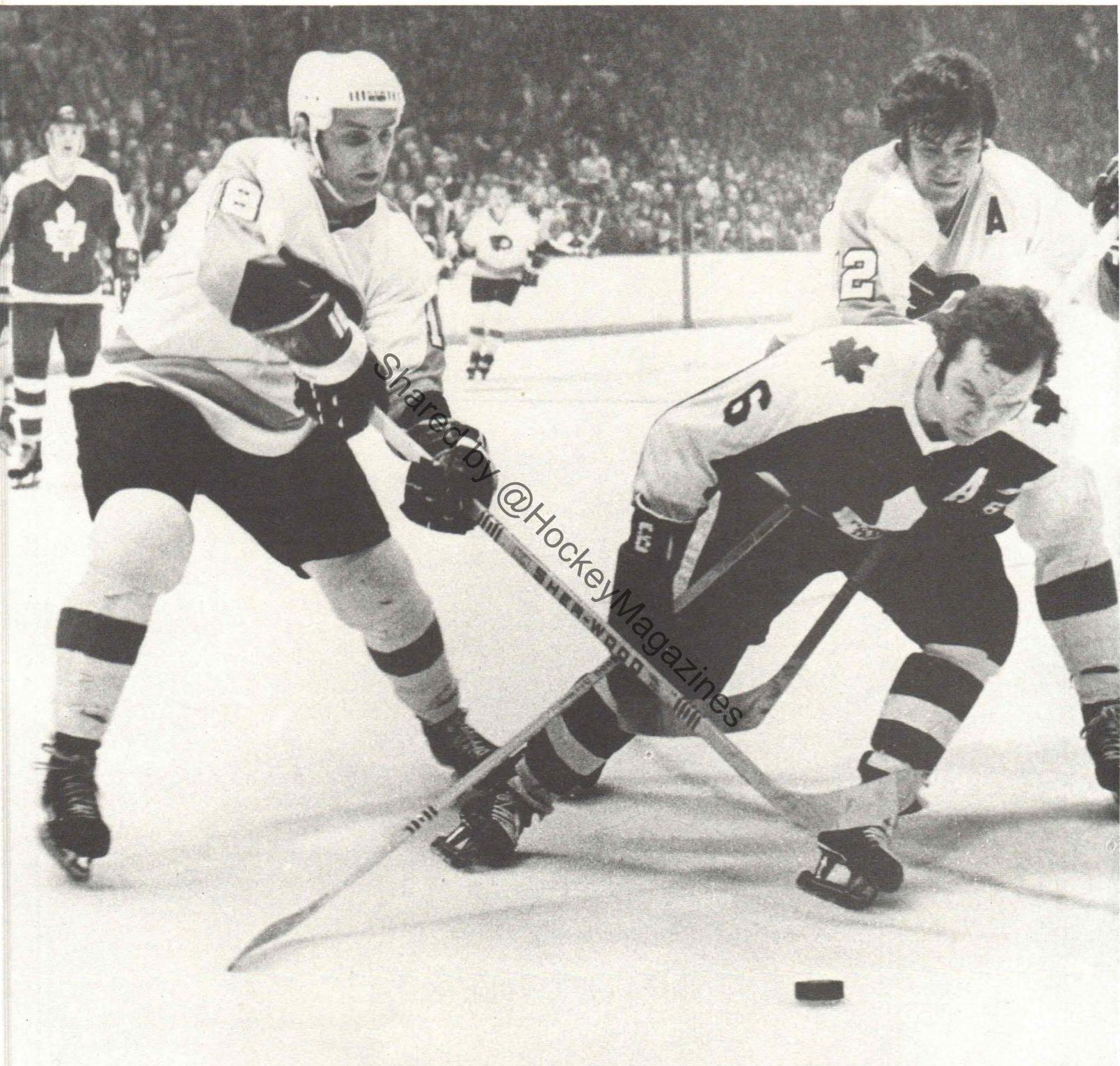


Defenseman Jim Watson prevents a Black Hawk from gaining position in the Flyer goal crease.



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Ron Ellis of Toronto gets a taste of tough Flyer checking as he is taken out of the play by Ross Lonsberry (18) and Gary Dornhoefer.





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give that little extra that wins games. That's the difference between an established club and an expansion team that just goes through the motions."

The Flyers repulsed the repeated assaults on their mountain top made by the Black Hawks and, by mid-February, Philadelphia held a substantial six point lead. Their heavy-hitting tactics had earned them the respect of enemies in both divisions. What's more, the Flyers knew it.

"We play it tough," said Shero after his club had beaten Toronto, 3-1, at Maple Leaf Gardens on February 13th, 1974. "This style has enabled some of our players to get a lot of room on the ice. Other teams are just as big as we are, but we have some who are willing to have a go and aren't afraid to lose a fight or two."

A few days later they journeyed to Montreal to play a Sunday afternoon game against the Canadiens which was carried over the NBC television network. This time the clubs engaged in a mammoth brawl in which both benches emptied. The Flyers didn't win every bout but one brawl featured Dave Schultz and Montreal defenseman John Van Boxmeer.

Schultz flattened the Canadian with one jab. "I never knocked a guy out with one punch before," said Schultz. But that's just the way it was for the Philadelphia sextet. They could do no wrong.

The Black Hawks did produce an earnest challenge to the first-place Flyers in the homestretch but Shero's skaters betrayed more poise than ever and held fast. Philadelphia was the best in the West; everybody agreed now.

"The Flyers have everything," said St. Louis Blues coach Lou Angotti. "They've got scoring, defense and the best goalie in the league. They've got more fighters than anyone else. And they can win on the road. The only things they haven't got so far are first place and the Stanley Cup."

Chicago was beaten back and the Flyers annexed the Clarence Campbell Bowl, for the second time in their history.

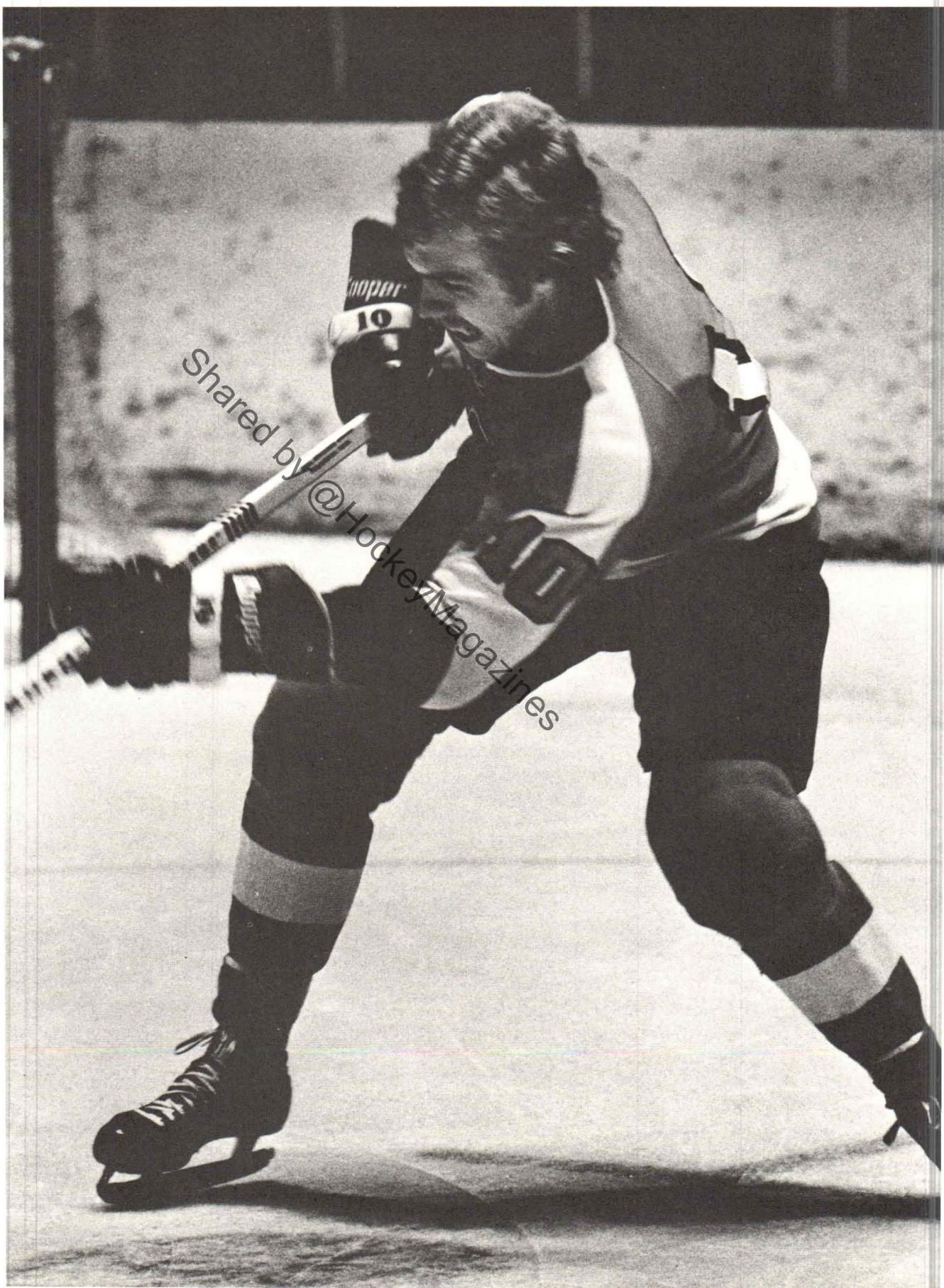
As for the Stanley Cup, Lou Angotti winked. "They haven't got it yet; but I wouldn't underrate them either."

The Flyers had taken the first step on the road to THE CUP.



Jean Ratelle and Terry Crisp vie for the puck; Ratelle seems to have it.

*Center Bill Clement passes after winning
a face-off.*



"Cowboy" Bill Flett was a big factor in the Flyers' rise in 1973-74. During the 1972-73 season, Flett scored a career high of 43 goals.





Dave Schultz (left) harasses Red Berenson of Detroit as the puck carrier heads into Flyer ice.



the end of the rainbow

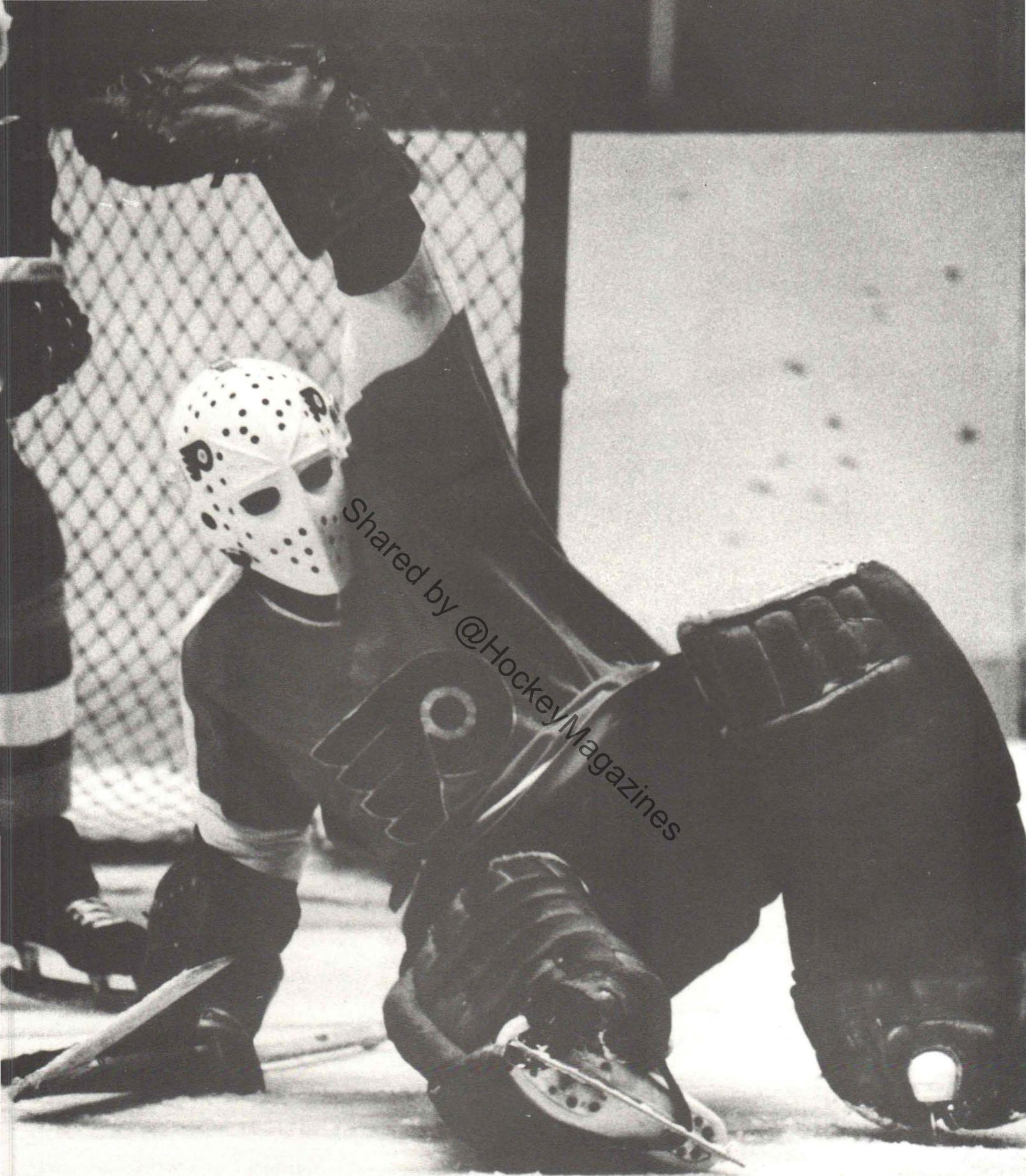
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Winning the Clarence Campbell Bowl was a major victory but it hardly signaled the end of the war. There were major battles to be waged starting with the opening series against Atlanta's precocious Flames.

If the Flyers could handle Boom Boom Geoffrion's young, galvanic club, they then would advance to the semi-finals either against Montreal or the Rangers.

The Flames had played competently and checked well against Philadelphia during the regular campaign, and some Atlantans predicted an upset in favor of the Southern sextet. The Flyers entered the first round as persuasive favorites.

As expected, the Flames played capably but the Flyers were too strong, from goaltender to centerman. Coach Fred Shero's men skated to a pair of victories at The Spectrum before invading Atlanta and taking Georgia by storm, in a manner that would have made General Sherman proud.



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The rampaging Philadelphians won the third game, stirring Atlanta hockey fans to new heights—or depths, as the case may be—of hostility. Anger reached a boiling point following the first game in Atlanta's Omni on April 13, 1974.

Following a late evening Flyers' team meeting at the Regency Hyatt House, Shero was attacked by several Flames' fans outside the hotel and emerged from the fracas badly mauled from head to waist. The coach was cut on the back and bruised and cut about the face. He also suffered a gash on his left forearm that later required stitches.

Flyers' public relations director John Brogan asserted that Shero had been jumped by two men. The injuries were severe enough to force the coach to return to Philadelphia while his assistant, Mike Nykoluk, handled the club for the fourth match.

While Shero was jetting back to Pennsylvania, the Flyers were on Omni ice attempting to wrap up the opening round in four straight games. The Flames were less than cooperative, forging ahead and seemingly in command with a 3-1 lead.

But a hallmark of the Flyers' has been a tenacious determination to fight back from what appears to be untenable, losing positions. The club, temporarily orchestrated by assistant coach Mike Nykoluk, overcame the deficit and tied the match at 3-3, forcing a sudden-death overtime.

For nearly six minutes the teams exchanged offensive ripostes but goaltenders Bernie Parent and Phil Myre stonewalled the attackers. Finally, Nykoluk, remembering how Clarke-to-Schultz passes had come close to producing goals in the third period, dispatched Dave Schultz and Bobby Clarke to the offense.

This time Nykoluk was a genius. Clarke captured the puck, as usual, and hurled the pass to Schultz who had camped in front of goalie Myre. "I usually just slap at the puck and try to drill it past the goalkeepers' pads," Schultz explained, "but this time I gave Myre a little fake and shot the puck along the ice."

Bernie Parent makes a spectacular save.

The clock registered 5:40 of overtime when Schultz set off the little red light behind the Flames' net. "Hammer" had sealed the series in four games for Philadelphia and now the Flyers awaited the outcome of the Rangers-Canadiens series.

A year earlier Montreal had simply routed the Flyers in a five-game semi-final series. Some Philadelphia skaters thirsted for revenge against Scotty Bowman and his sextet. They were hoping to meet the Canadiens again.

Others, such as Schultz, said he'd rather skate against the Rangers. Hammer pointed out that the New Yorkers had a habit of "choking" in big games. Schultz made no bones about it and soon his candid appraisal inspired headlines up and down Broadway. When the Rangers finally defeated Montreal in six games the impending Philadelphia-New York series had taken on all aspects of a grudge battle. Schultz, of course, was the prime target of Ranger players.

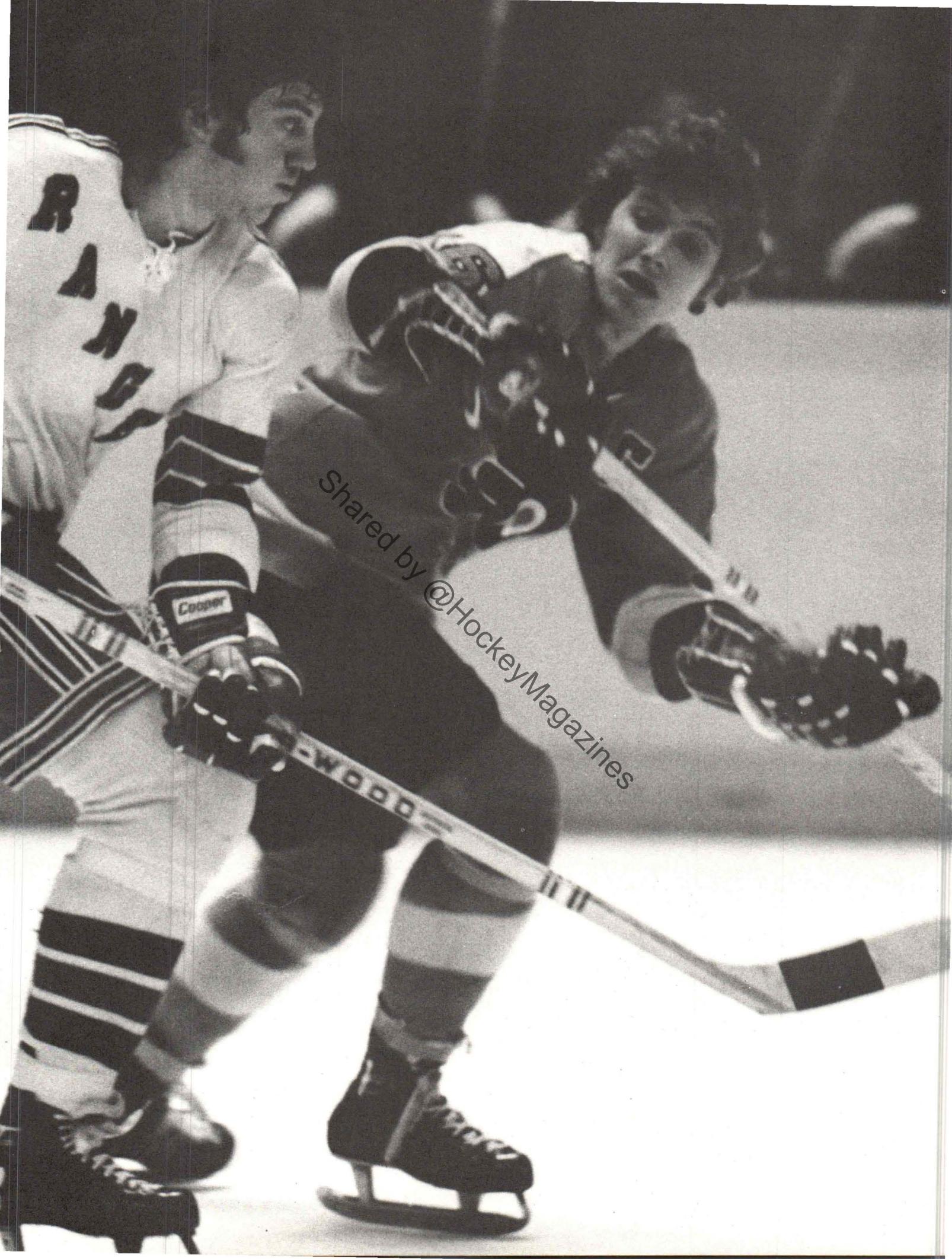
The series opened on April 20, 1974 at The Spectrum before a wild-eyed, optimistic crowd of more than 16,000 Flyers' fans. Within minutes it was apparent that their optimism was well-founded. Bobby Clarke and Andre "Moose" Dupont sandwiched the previously indestructible Rangers' center Walt Tkaczuk and sent him to the sidelines woozy from the double-blow.

Deflated by the loss of their crack pivot, New York's forwards lost their steam while the rampaging Flyers hurled four pucks into the New York net behind goalie Ed Giacomin. What's more, coach Shero had instructed his skaters to check the roaming Rangers' goaltender whenever possible.

"We bothered Eddie," Shero admitted, "but not enough to take a penalty."

The Flyers bothered their more experienced opponents in other ways, too. Shero's skaters confounded the Rangers with a brand of irksome checking that few teams had exhibited before. What's more, the Flyers were tightly-disciplined and withstood a brief New York rally in the third period.

Bobby Clarke skates against the Rangers.

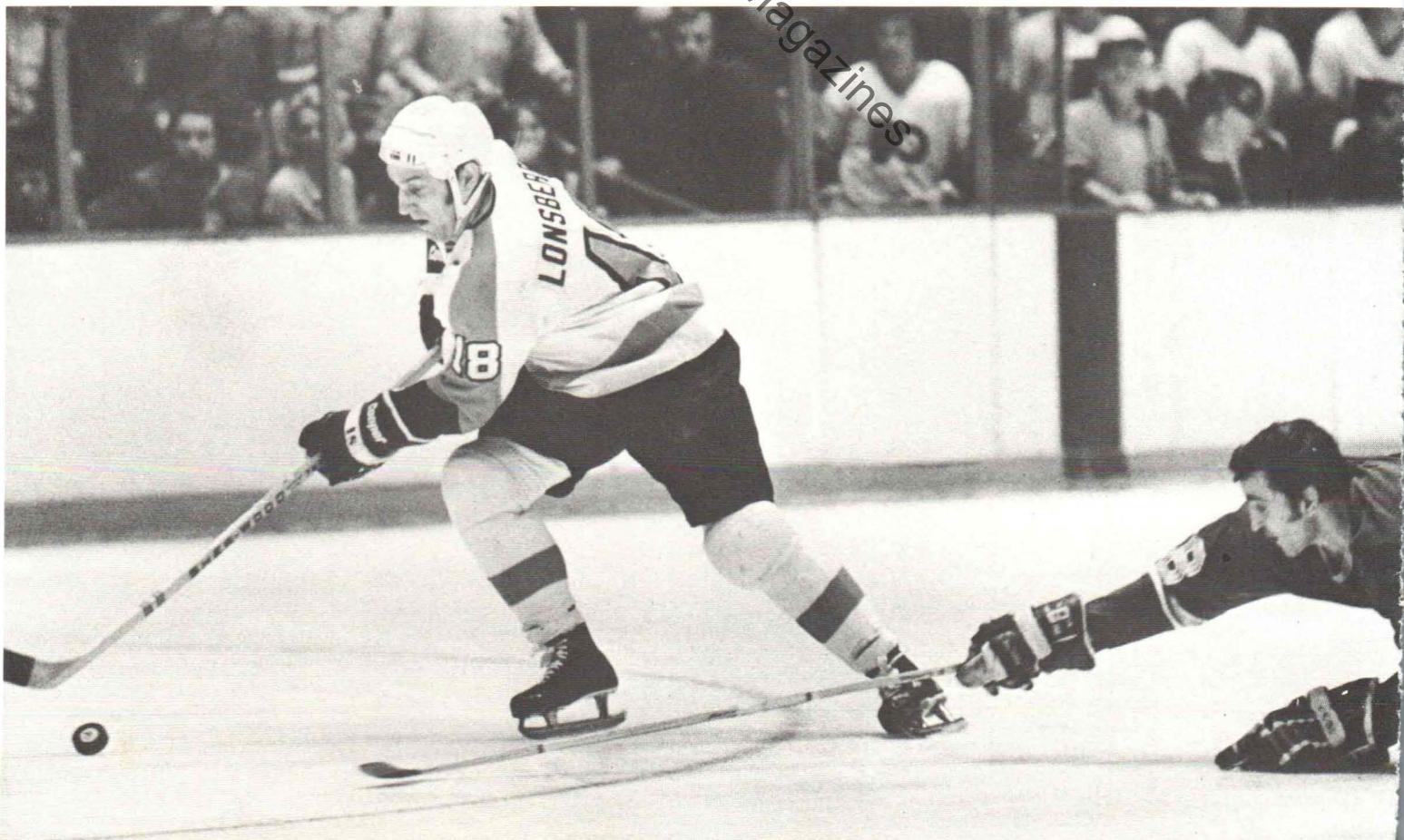


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Defenseman Joe Watson checks Larry Sacharuk of the Rangers.

Left wing Ross Lonsberry.



At the final buzzer, the score was Philadelphia 4, New York, 0. The decision represented the first Rangers shutout since March 24, 1973—a span of 99 games.

Post-mortems flew like snow in the Arctic. Ranger-watchers insisted that the Blueshirts needed one game to recover from the six-game Montreal series. They predicted a strong Rangers' counterattack in the second game, also at The Spectrum.

"We'll have a few more motors going," said Rangers' general manager-coach Emile Francis. "And we'll be hitting. You have to skate and hit, take the ice away from the Flyers to win and we can do it. We've done it before and we'll do it again."

Francis was whistling in the dark. The Flyers romped, 5-2, mostly because Ross Lonsberry, Shero's choice as the NHL's best left wing, relieved a fallen Pete Stempowski of the puck and then sailed in to easily beat goalie Giacomin. Lonsberry scored twice in the third period and captured the limelight usually reserved for teammates Clarke and Parent.

As expected it was a dog-eat-dog battle. At center stage, Clarke and Tkaczuk exchanged check for check, blow for blow and elbow for elbow. Referee Dave Newell whistled them off for infractions of the rule book but still the infighting continued. "When Clarke and Tkaczuk battle," said Shero, "let 'em battle. They can take it. They're honest. That's what we need, honesty in hockey. They're not guys skating around gracefully, trying to look beautiful."

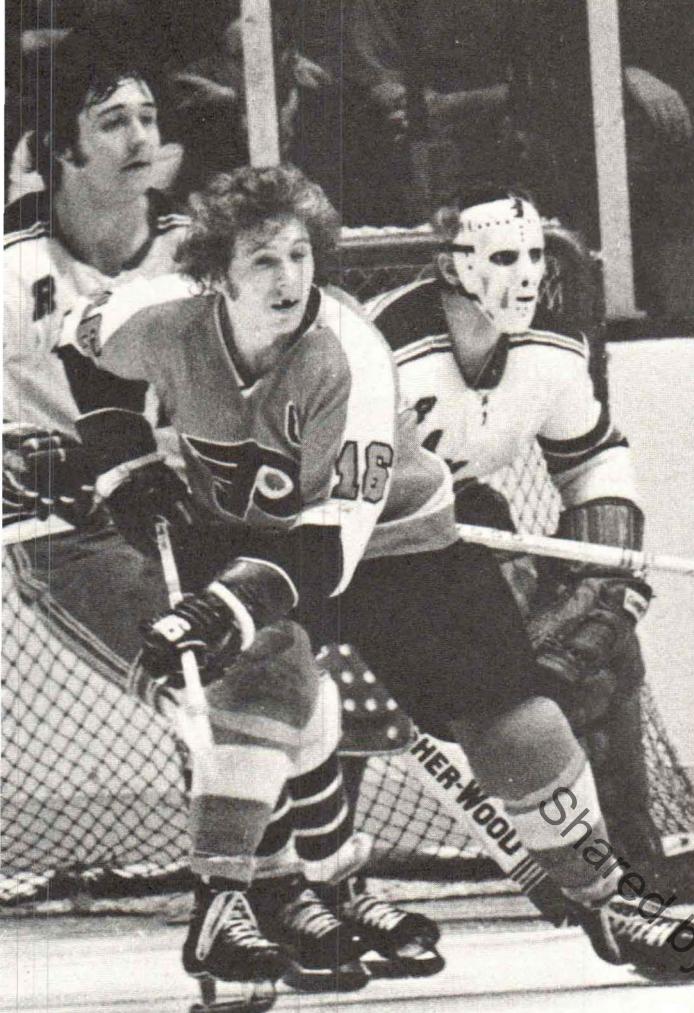
Clarke had another perspective: "The way I look at it, it was even. Every time I'd get a penalty, he'd get one. Everytime we ran into each other the referee called something. Tkaczuk called me a few things, too. But, remember, I'm four inches shorter than he is."

Leading the series two games to none, the Flyers moved their entourage to Manhattan and an extremely hostile atmosphere in Madison Square Garden. The arena's normally large complement of security patrolmen were beefed up by 25 per cent and particular attention was given to the protection of Dave Schultz who previously had been villified by New York fans.

Shared by @BookDragon

Ed Van Impe and the Rangers' Walt Tkaczuk (right) eye each other warily.





An alert Bobby Clarke in front of the Rangers' net.

"I know the fans will give me a bad time," said Schultz. "That doesn't bother me. In fact all that stuff does is psych me up even more for the game."

This time, however, the Rangers were psyched up, too. Encouraged by a roaring crowd of 17,500, the New Yorkers won the match, 5-3, and made it abundantly evident that they were not about to expire.

Surprisingly, the Flyers emerged from the game more relaxed than the Rangers. Francis continued his policy of having secret scrimmages, asserting "it (the work-out) is nobody's business but our own."

By contrast, Shero maintained the loosey-goosey air about Flyers' practice sessions. They remained open to the press. Furthermore, Shero insisted that the Francis' policy was silly.

"We have nothing to hide," said Shero. "Anybody is welcome to see everything we do in practice. It's execution that wins games—not surprises."

As things turned out, the Rangers executed better than the flyers in Game Four; better by one goal. New York right wing Rod Gilbert beat goalie Parent in sudden-death overtime to post a Ranger win 2-1. But that was the least of Shero's concerns. His ace defenseman, Barry Ashbee, had been struck in the right eye by a puck shot by New York's Dale Rolfe.

Ashbee's 12-year professional hockey career was ended with that blow, although he didn't receive the official medical verdict until after the playoffs. As for the Flyers, they now had to muck their way through the series with rookie defenseman Tom Bladon taking a regular turn in place of Ashbee.

The fifth game of the series, at The Spectrum, was regarded by many experts, as the most decisive of the tournament. A Rangers' victory would mean the teams would then return to New York where the Blueshirts would be favored to wrap up the round. A Flyers' triumph would leave them but one game away from the series and two more games left in which to attain that coveted win.

Captain Clarke summed up the prevailing Flyers' opinion, "The team that's got the guts . . . the team that wants to win it the most . . . those will be the deciding factors in the fifth game."

If that were the case, Philadelphia's heroes had the guts, the goals and the glamour. They won the game, 4-1, and returned to Gotham for what they hoped would be the deciding and decisive sixth match. To the enormous surprise of Philadelphians, the pussy-cat Rangers did not fold up and quit. They retaliated with a 4-1 decision and, even more surprising, Clarke missed several excellent scoring chances.

With the score tied, 1-1, and Bobby killing a Flyers' penalty, the Philadelphia captain broke free of Rangers' skaters and confronted Giacomin, one-on-one. "I had the whole top of the net to shoot at," Clarke explained. "He went down and I just had to flip it over him."

Clarke did flip it over the goaltender but the shot also cleared the net and an important scoring chance evaporated. But those things happen in the course of a series. What mattered most was whether the Philadelphians could regain momentum in the seventh and deciding game on May 5, 1974 at The Spectrum.

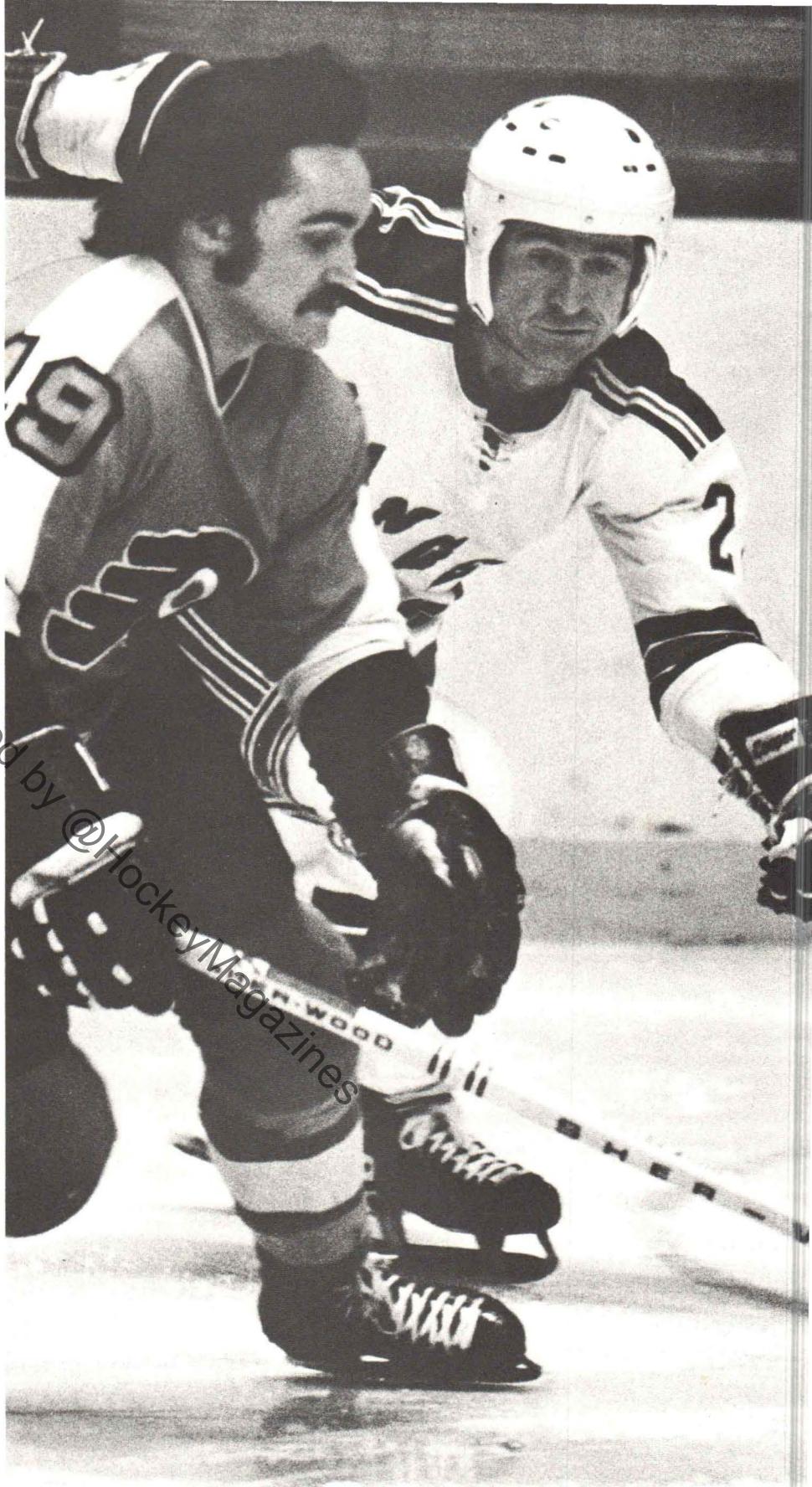
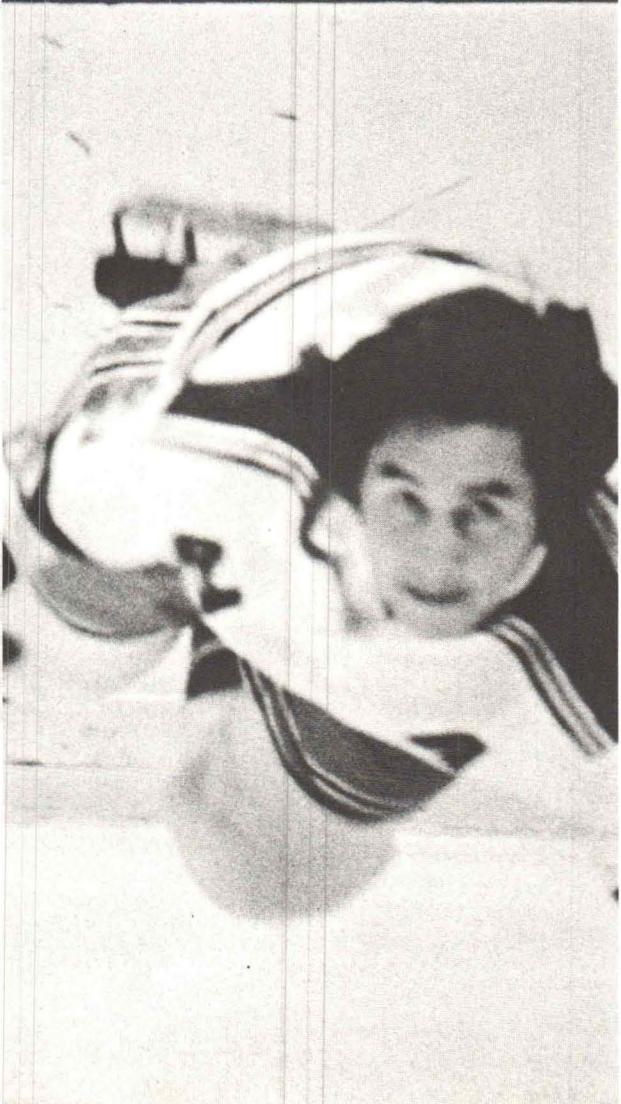
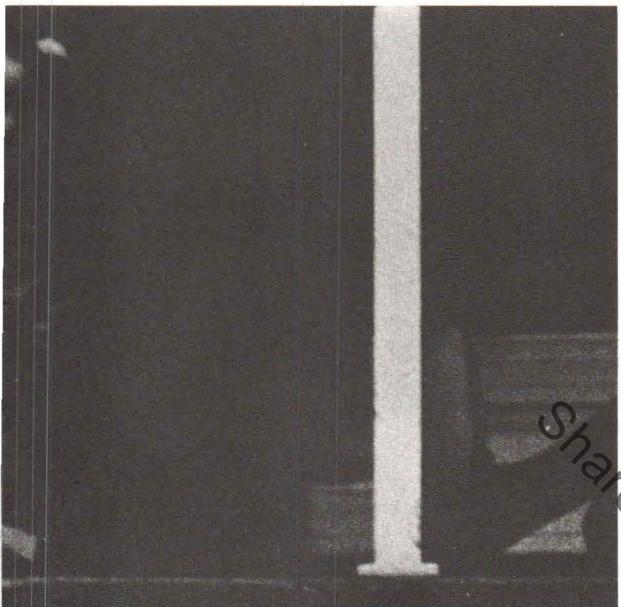
In the end, most observers believed, the series would be determined by the excellence of goaltenders Parent and Giacomin. "Bernie," said veteran goalie Gump Worsley, "is playing like Jacques Plante in his heyday; and that's just sensational."

Giacomin was at the top of his game, too. But the Rangers' goaltender had a history of never winning the really big ones and, once more, he was on the spot. His right winger, Bill Fairbairn, gave Giacomin a go-ahead goal to work with at 13:43 of the first period but the Rangers obviously couldn't stand prosperity. Rick MacLeish immediately tied the game in less than a minute and now the Flyers were off and winging.

Orest Kindrachuk and Gary Dornhoefer provided the Flyers with a 3-1 lead in the second period as Philadelphia skaters stormed the New York goal again and again. "Eddie Giacomin kept us alive," said Ranger defenseman Rod Seiling of his goaltender.

Bobby Clarke checks Jim Neilson and sends the Ranger defenseman sprawling to the ice.

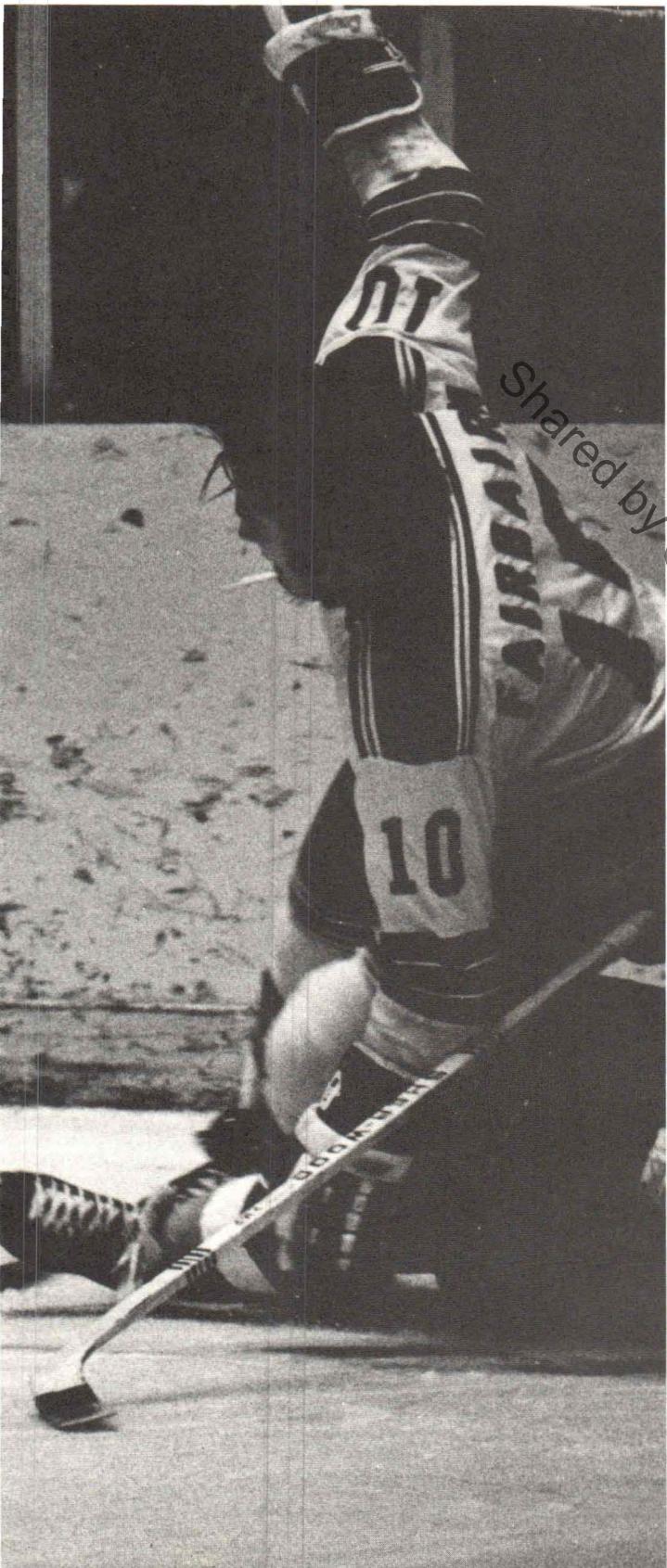




*Rick MacLeish skates past New York's
Bobby Rousseau.*

*Goalie Bernie Parent makes an easy stop
of a Ranger shot.*





On the other hand, Bernie Parent was blunting the most dangerous New York thrusts and continued to do so through the early minutes of the third period. At last, Parent wilted and gave up another tally at 8:49 when Steve Vickers beat him with a short, forehand flip from the front of the net.

This was the situation old-timers in the press box had awaited. They expected the young Flyers to crumble under a relentless Rangers' attack, and blow the series. Instead, they stared wide-eyed as the Broad Street sextet regrouped and, within 12 seconds, Dornhoefer scored his second goal. The Flyers once again had a two goal lead.

Now the onus was on the Rangers. They revved up their engine and pumped rubber at Parent. At 14:34 they came within a goal of tying the game when Peter Stempowski beat Parent. But the Flyers tightened their defenses and grew stronger as the clock ticked off the final minutes.

At last the green light signalled "game over" and the Flyers gamboled on to the ice to smother Parent with embraces as the Rangers lined up for the traditional handshaking ceremonies. "I didn't think the Flyers could do it," said Rangers' ace Brad Park, "but they finally beat us with a good, honest hockey game."

Burly New York utility man Ron Harris added: "If we had to play 78 games a year against the Flyers, we'd all retire after one season, because we'd all be worn out."

As for the Flyers, they couldn't wait to get their hands on the so-called Big, Bad Bruins. Many of the older Philadelphia fans remembered how the Boston bullies had intimidated the Flyers in the early days of expansion. They thirsted for revenge and were indignant that NHL president Clarence Campbell should suggest that the Flyers were playing too rough.

"The Bruins used to triple-team us and beat us up," said Flyers' chairman Ed Snider. "Why didn't people scream then? Oh, but now there's a whole new situation and Campbell tells us this team must be controlled."

Meanwhile, the Bruins waited.

Bobby Clarke and Phil Esposito battle for position during the Stanley Cup finals.



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the big prize

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Normally, a professional hockey coach entering a Stanley Cup final for the first time regards his opposition with respect and discretion; especially when the enemy happens to be Bobby Orr, Phil Esposito and the Boston Bruins. But the Flyers were not a normal hockey club and their coach Fred Shero was extraordinary, to say the least. As soon as Philadelphia eliminated New York and prepared to emplane for Boston, Shero downgraded the Bruins.

"New York is a better team than Boston," Shero asserted. "The Rangers have better players. We have a good chance to win the Stanley Cup."

The Bruins were not quite sure what to make of Shero and his charges.

During the regular season the Bruins had won three, tied one and lost one to the Flyers during which the Beantowners had outscored Shero's skaters, 20-16. It was not until their final meeting, in The Spectrum, when the Bruins had first place locked up that the West Division champions were able to defeat Boston.

Rick MacLeish emerged as a Flyer star when he scored 50 goals and tallied 50 assists during the 1972-73 season.

"You can forget what happened during the regular season," said Bruins' ace Phil Esposito. "The Flyers will be much tougher now. And they'll get great goal-tending from Bernie Parent."

How prophetic Esposito's words.

The Flyers lost the opening game of the finals at Boston Garden—but not by much. The score was tied, 2-2, with 22 seconds remaining in the third period when Bobby Orr beat Parent to give Boston a 3-2 triumph and a one nothing edge in games. Of greater significance the Flyers served notice that they belonged in the same arena as the Bruins. Every one of the Boston stickhandlers knew it and so did the Flyers.

In Game Two, also in Boston, it appeared for a while as if the Flyers were dead. Period. They trailed 2-0 and seemed to be on the ropes when captain Clarke rallied them with a goal in the second period. However, Bruins' goalie Gilles Gilbert contained the Flyers as the third period elapsed and less than a minute remained.

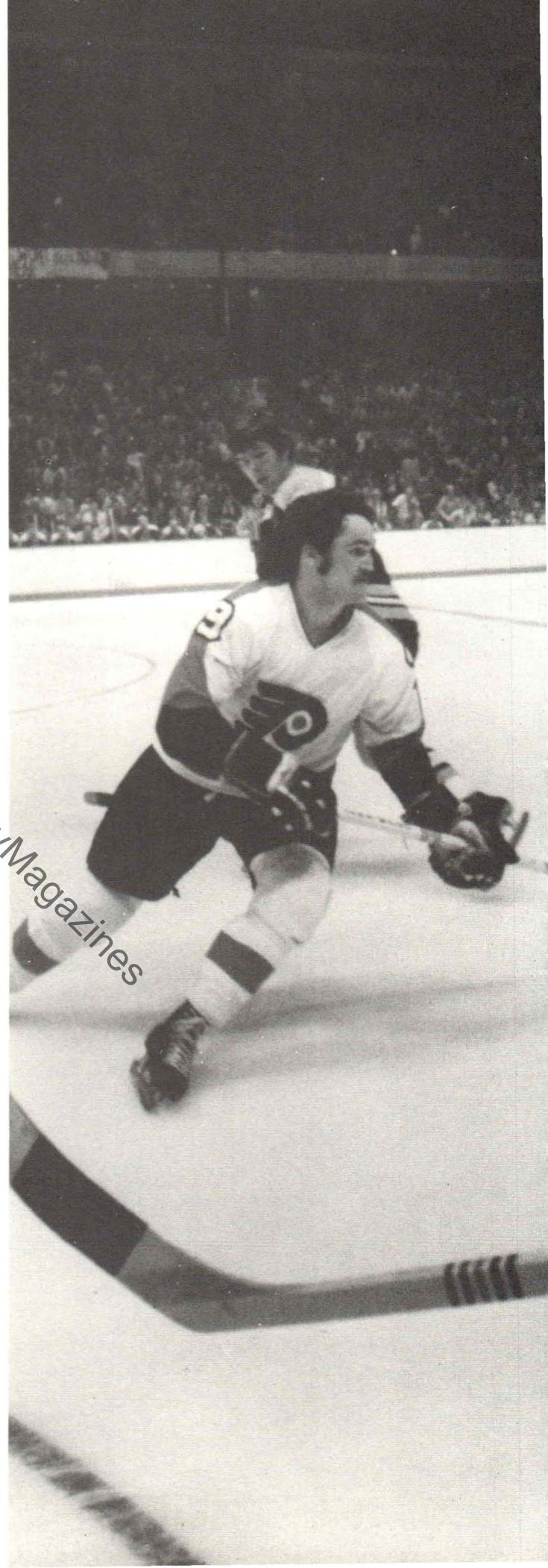
It was then that the Flyers trademark became most noticeable. They clawed for the puck, pulled Parent off the ice for a sixth attacker and gained control in Boston territory.

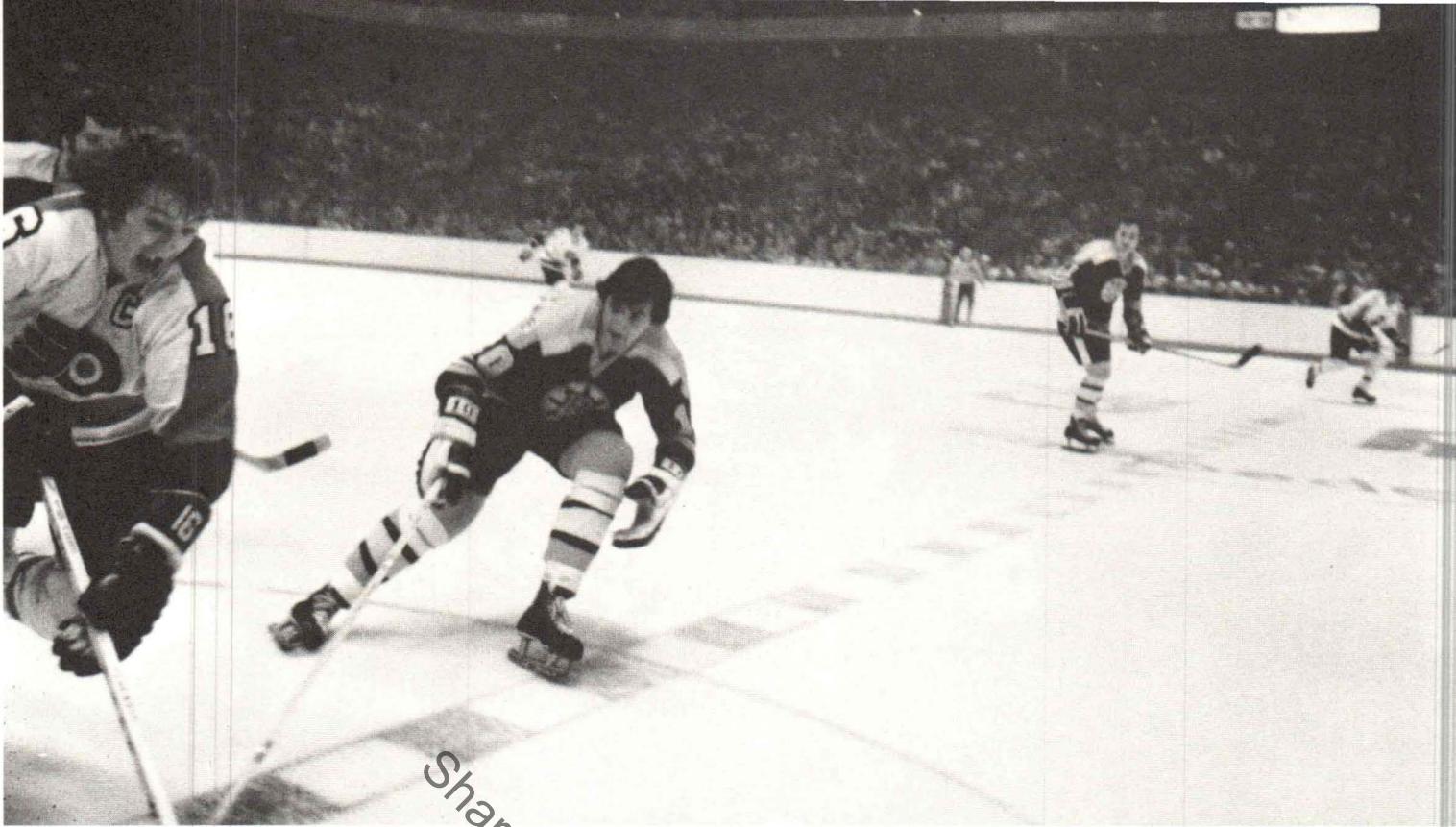
"Rick MacLeish got the puck and sent the pass out to me," said defenseman Andre "Moose" Dupont. "I was all by myself in the slot. The goalie was screened so I just let the shot slide along the ice."

The 25-foot route was covered in two seconds. Dupont watched the shot go into the net with 52 seconds remaining and then pranced across the rink in high glee. The score was tied, 2-2, and sudden death overtime would have to be played.

In the early moments of the extra period Philadelphia dominated the play. Clarke won ten of 14 face-offs from Phil Esposito. "Bobby," said teammate Ross Lonsberry, "is the most valuable guy there is even if he never scores."

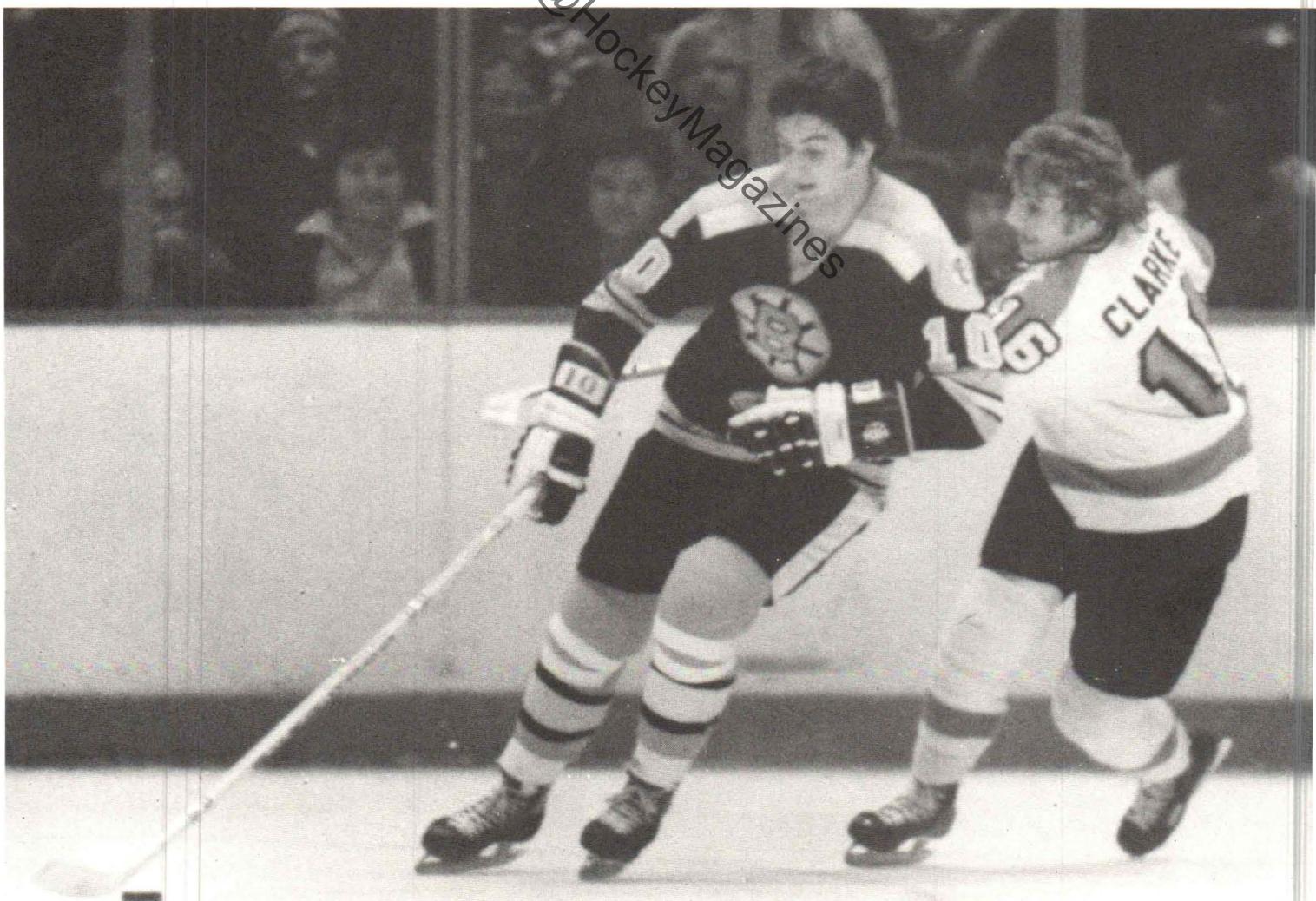
This time Bobby *did* score. "Dave Schultz dug the puck out of the corner," Clarke recalled, "and got it to Bill Flett. Then, Bill moved it to me."

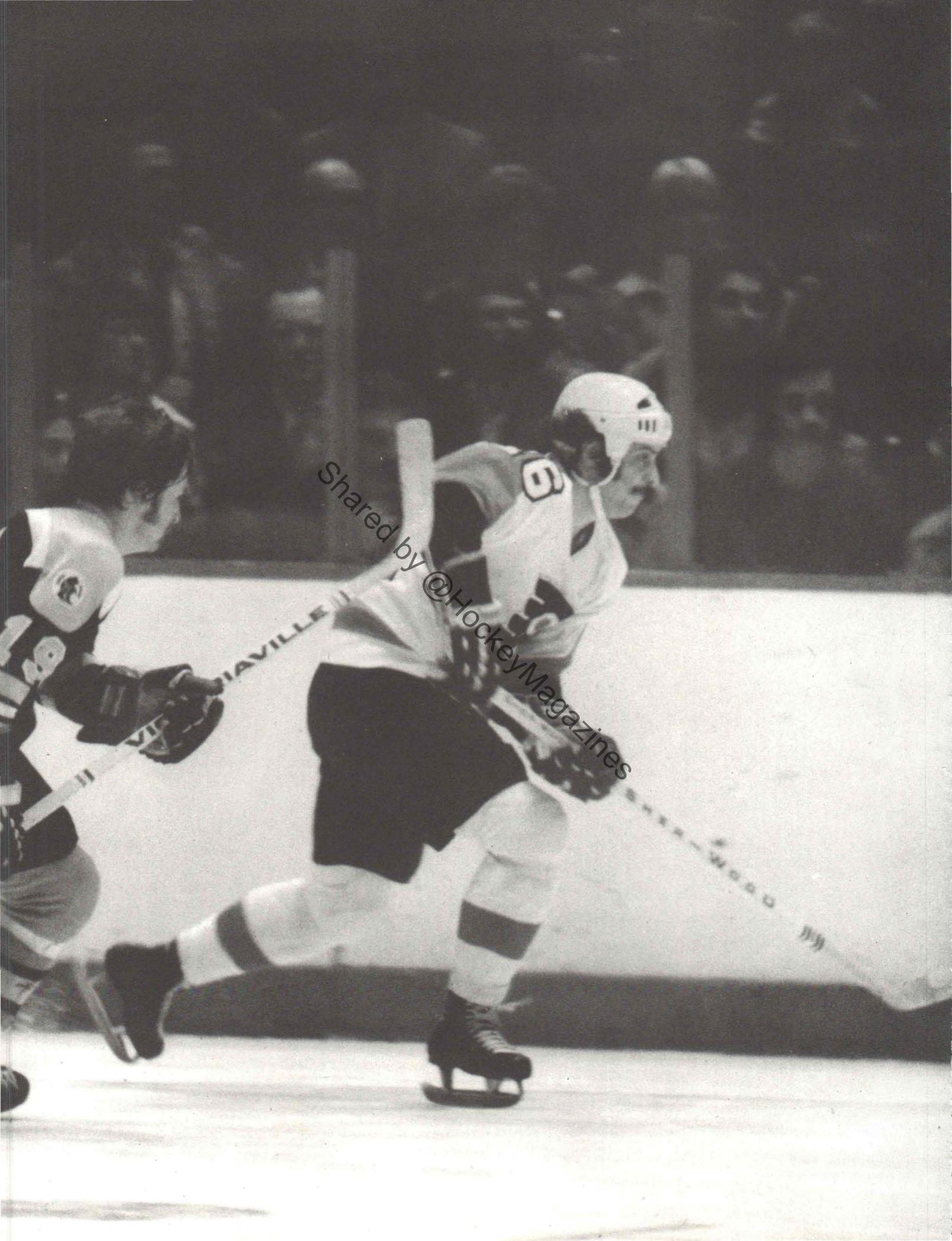




Bobby Clarke skates around Boston's Carol Vadnais during Stanley Cup action.

Bobby Clarke chases Carol Vadnais deep in the Boston zone.





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Clarke took a shot that was stopped by Gilbert. But he hung in there and captured his own rebound, sending it spinning over the embattled Bruins' goalie. The time was 12:01 of sudden death. The series was tied at one apiece.

Now the teams moved on to Philadelphia where the Flyers were expected to flex their muscles tighter than ever. The Bruins tried to appear unimpressed. "The Flyers can't intimidate us," said Boston defenseman Carol Vadnais. If they do start to try a lot of hitting, we'll hit them right back. Nobody will push us around."

The sudden-death victory filled the Flyers with confidence. "Our team's courage is unbelievable," said Shero. "I've never coached a club like this. It only comes along once in a lifetime. I may have had my doubts before, but now I really feel we'll win the Stanley Cup!"

Playing their checking game to perfection and skating with greater strength as the game progressed, the Flyers overwhelmed Boston 4-1; in the third game and the capacity Spectrum crowd of 17,077 went wild as dreams of a Stanley Cup suddenly looked real.

The hero this time was utility forward Terry Crisp who broke a 1-1 tie by threading a needle with his shot at 15:43 of the first period. Crisp started the play by winning a face-off in Bruins' territory but then losing the puck, or so it seemed, to defensemen Dallas Smith and Carol Vadnais.

But the Bruins hesitated and while the two looked at the rubber, Terry dived for it, gave it a little shove out of their reach and himself some shooting room. "I didn't aim it," Crisp explained. Whatever he did was right. Orest Kindrachuk and Ross Lonsberry iced the game with goals in the third period.

For the first time signs of panic and dissension were evident in the Bruins' locker room. Coach Guidolin furiously criticized aces such as Phil Esposito and third-stringers such as Bobby Schmautz.

Yet, the Flyers were hurting. Barry Ashbee, Bob Kelly, Gary Dornhoefer and Bill Clement had succumbed to injuries. The reserves were thinning and it was questionable as to how long they could last. Clearly, the fourth game at The Spectrum would be extremely meaningful.

Center Orest Kindrachuk passes Bruin Gregg Sheppard and flies down the left side.

In the fourth, Philadelphia grabbed a 2-0 lead only to watch the Bruins ruthlessly grab the puck and tie the count at 2-2 before the first period was over. Boston dominated the middle period and might have had a dozen goals were it not for Bernie Parent's adroit goaltending. The Bruins didn't get one, though, and through half of the third period, shooters scintillated and goalies excelled.

With 5:35 remaining, Rick MacLeish stick-checked the puck away from Bobby Schmautz. Defenseman Jim Watson took over and dumped the rubber into the Bruins' zone.

The puck danced behind Bobby Orr and Ross Lonsberry. Orr got to it first and began a counterattack when the persistent Lonsberry flailed at Orr's stick and jostled the puck over to Bill Barber.

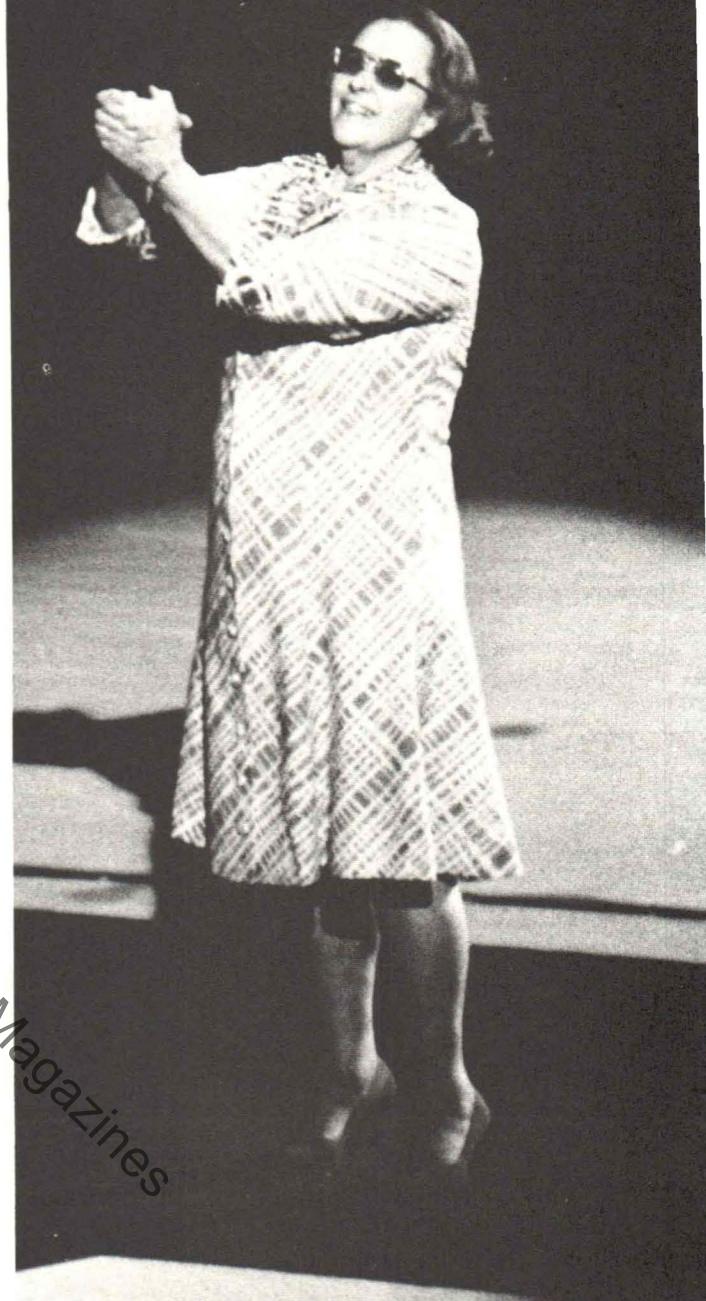
Barber, the big left wing, flung the puck into the far upper right corner of the Boston net, where the crossbar meets the upright. It sailed past goalie Gilbert's glove at precisely 14:25 of the third period.

Just two minutes later defenseman Andre Dupont intercepted the puck at the blue line and zigzagged his way toward the Boston crease before zapping a hard shot past Gilbert. Pandemonium reigned in the final minutes as the Flyers held on for a 4-2 win and were now only one game away from the Stanley Cup.

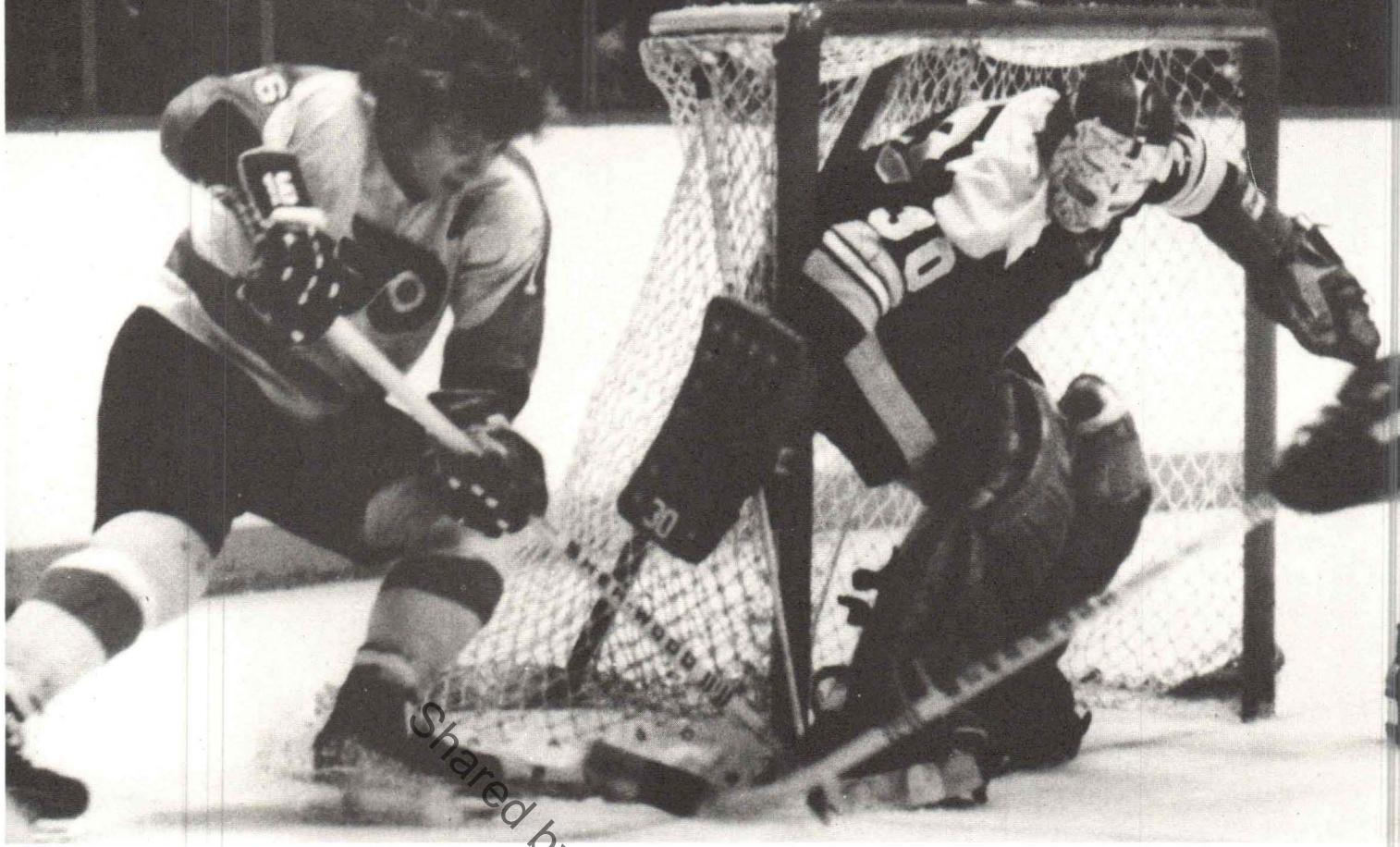
It was close, but not that close. Playing before the home crowd in Boston, the Bruins dominated Game Five from start to finish. The final tally was 5-1, producing deep gloom along Broad Street.

It meant that the Philadelphians would have to win Game Six, at The Spectrum, because, according to Bruin coach Guidolin the Bruins would win Game Seven at Boston Garden if the series went that far.

The Flyers were anxious but far from panicky. In addition to the home-ice advantage in Game Six they also had the intangible mystique of Kate Smith. It had become Flyers' policy to play Miss Smith's recording of "God Bless America" before singularly significant home games. As a good luck talisman Kate's recording was astonishingly successful. Philadelphia had won 36 of the 40 games before which "God Bless America" had been played. This time Kate was there in person.

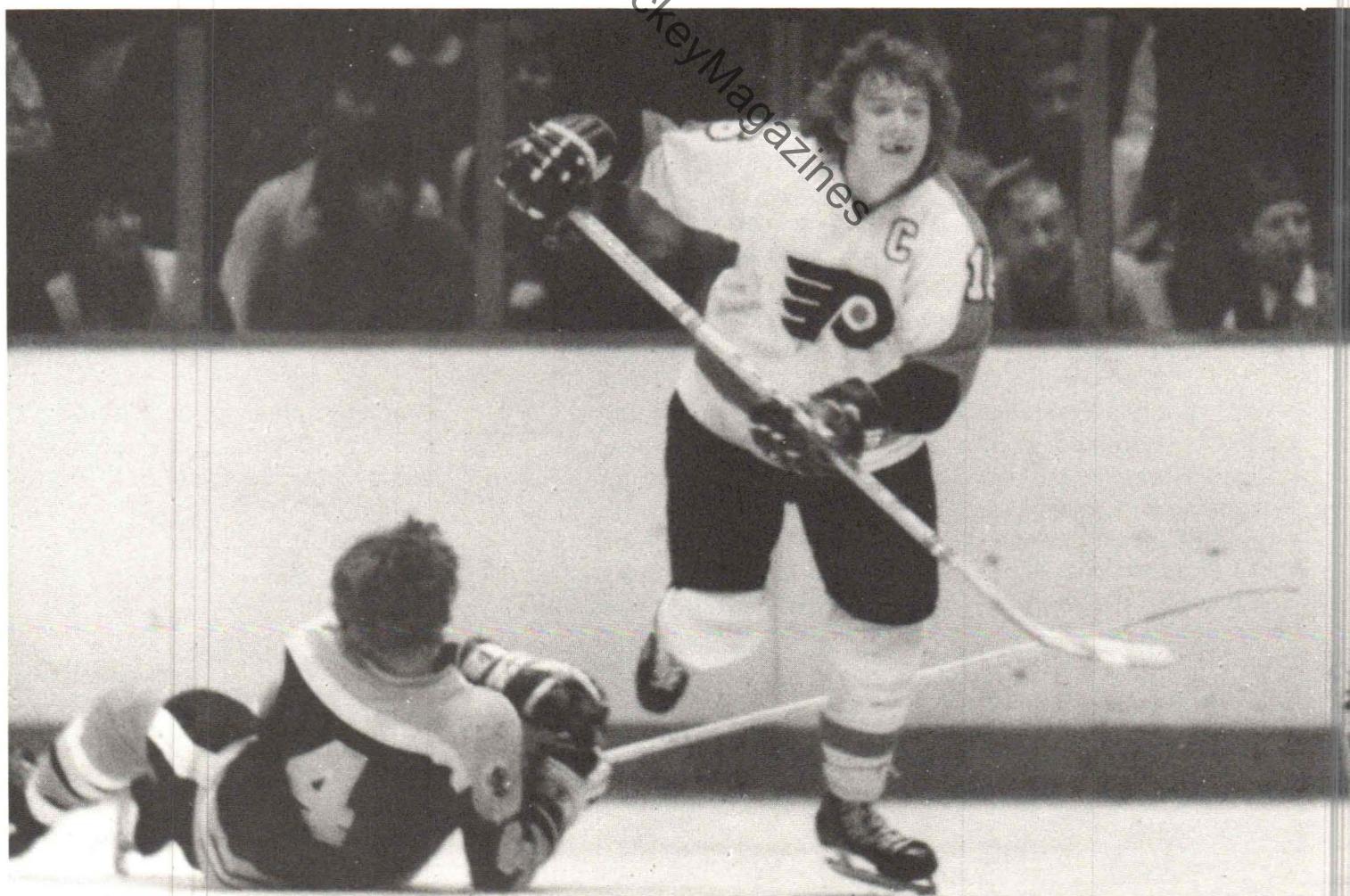


Kate Smith, the Flyers' good luck talisman sings "God Bless America" just before the start of the Flyers' Stanley Cup victory game.



Captain Bobby Clarke tries to force the puck past goalie Ross Brooks of Boston.

Bobby Clarke is up and Bobby Orr is down.



More practical types such as New York Islanders' coach Al Arbour pooh-poohed the idea of home-ice advantage or good luck charms. "The advantage," said Arbour, "is only in the mind."

At 14:48 of the first period, Moose Dupont was camped at his favorite spot near the right point when Rick MacLeish faced-off against Boston's Gregg Shepard. Terry O'Reilly was sitting out a minor penalty for the Bruins and Philadelphia's power play hoped to capitalize on the man advantage.

MacLeish won the draw and dropped the puck behind him to the waiting Dupont. The hulking defenseman skated in toward the net, veering slightly to the center.

Gilbert had a perfect bead on the puck as it left the defenseman's stick. "I saw it," said Gilbert, "until it got to a point about ten feet from the goal crease."

As the rubber headed goalward, MacLeish executed the most important maneuver of his hockey life. "I was standing just about two feet from the crease," said MacLeish, "and saw the puck coming in the air. I think it brushed my leg and then hit my stick in the air—right on the blade—and went in."

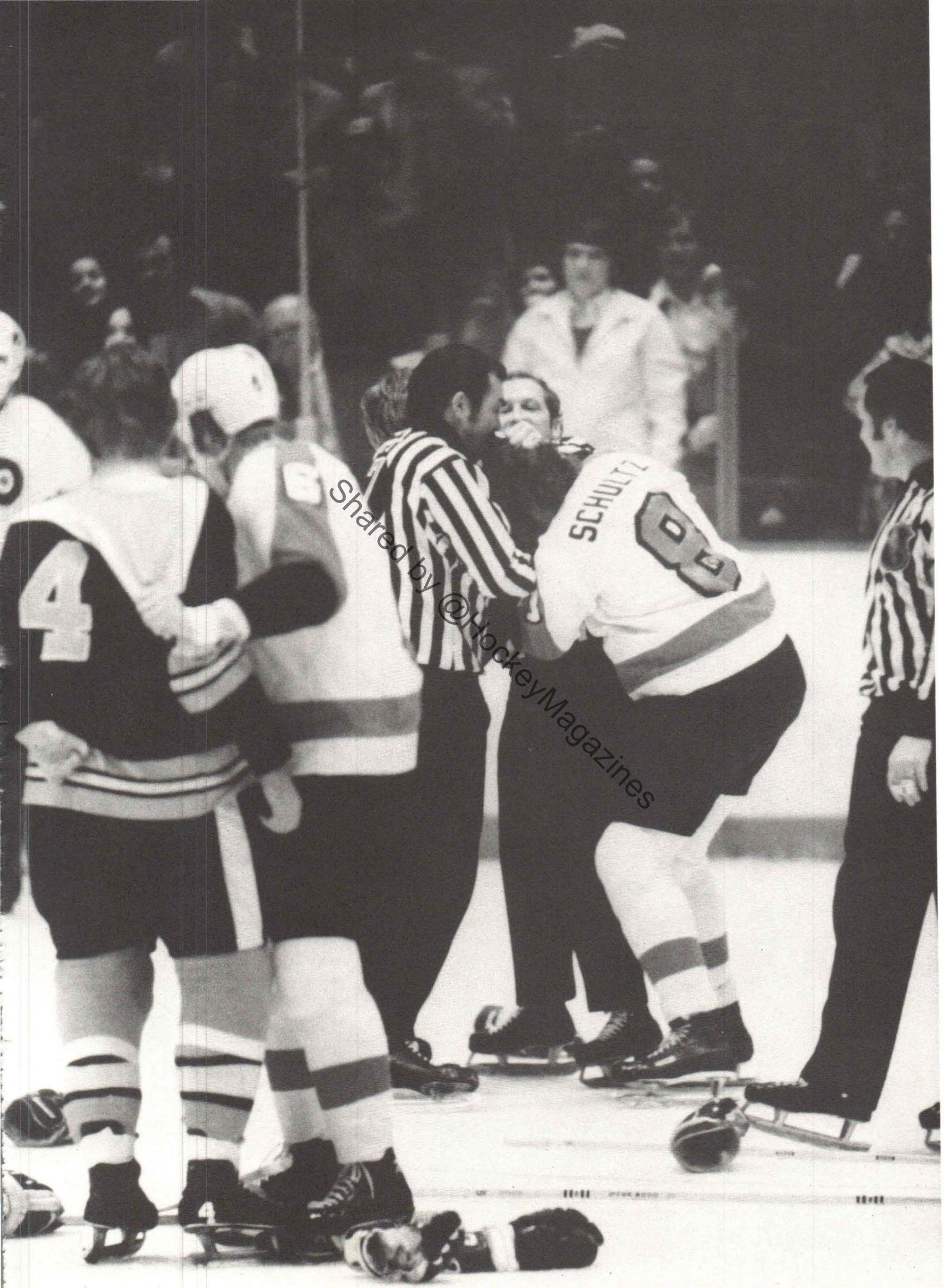
Gilbert appeared bewildered by the change of direction. "When the puck bounces off somebody like it did off MacLeish, you don't know if it's going high or low, right or left. You just hope you can block it."

He couldn't and the Flyers now owned a 1-0 lead with more than two periods remaining in regulation time. "At that point in the game," MacLeish recalled, "I certainly didn't think that would be the game-winner. Not at all."

Nor did the Bruins. They bombarded Parent relentlessly but the Flyers goalie was masterful, alternately punting, catching and chest-blocking pucks. Young Gilles Gilbert, was equally remarkable in the Boston cage.

In the second period the Beantown Gold Dust Twins, Phil Esposito and Bobby Orr, spearheaded the visitors' attack. Parent robbed Orr twice and Esposito once and the second period ended with Philadelphia still nursing the 1-0 lead.

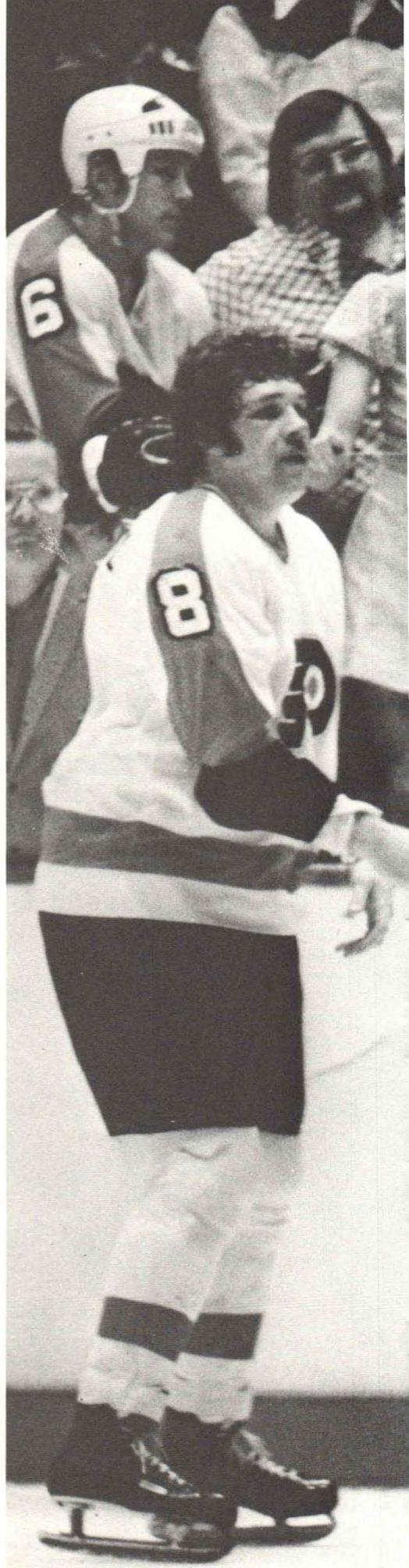
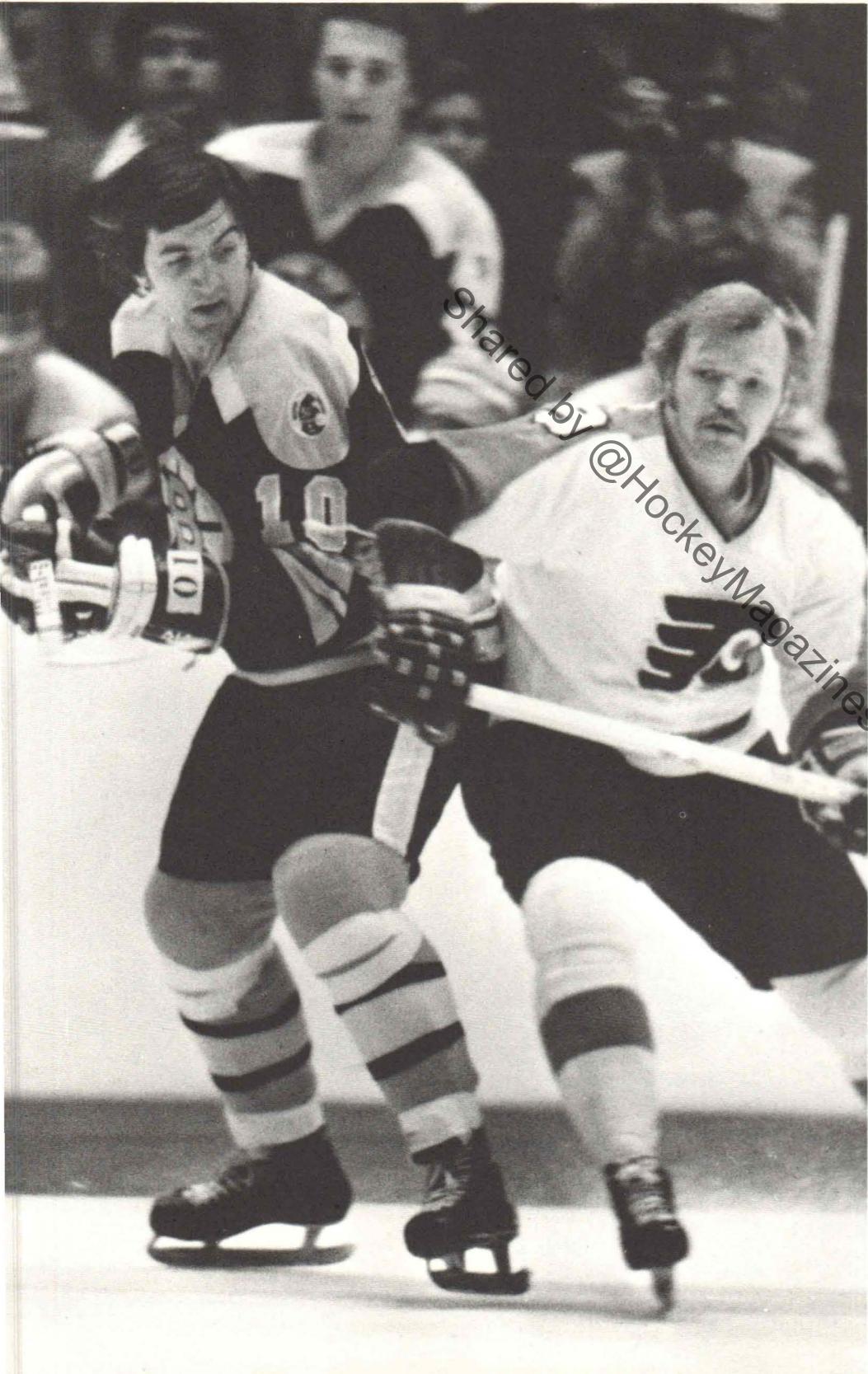
"Hammer" Schultz during one of his many bouts with Boston Bruins is restrained by linesman Matt Pavelich as Andre Dupont grabs Bobby Orr's jersey.



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"Hammering" Dave Schultz and Bruin Terry O'Reilly are separated during a flareup in Stanley Cup play.

Bob Kelly elbows Boston's Carol Vadnais outside the faceoff circle.





Time and again, the Bruins plunged over the Flyers' blue line in the third period, only to be stopped by stalwarts such as Ed Van Impe, Jim Watson and Tom Bladon.

Less than three minutes remained in the third period when the Flyers got a break. Captain Clarke glided over the Boston blue line and headed for goalie Gilbert. As Clarke prepared to release his shot, Bruins' defenseman Bobby Orr grabbed his waist, sending him sprawling. Referee Art Skov immediately whistled Orr to the penalty box for two minutes.

While Orr served his penalty and in the last 22 seconds a crescendo of deafening sound shook The Spectrum to its very foundations. "Five, four, three, two ONE!"

The countdown was over. "WE'RE NUMBER ONE!" flashed on the message board at center ice.

Defensemen Tom Bladon and Jim Watson embraced. "Can you believe it! Can you believe it!" they shouted ecstatically.

Fans swarmed on to the ice as the opponents lined up for the hand-shaking ceremonies. Bedlam was the order of the day as Bobby Clarke and Bernie Parent skated around the rink with The Cup.

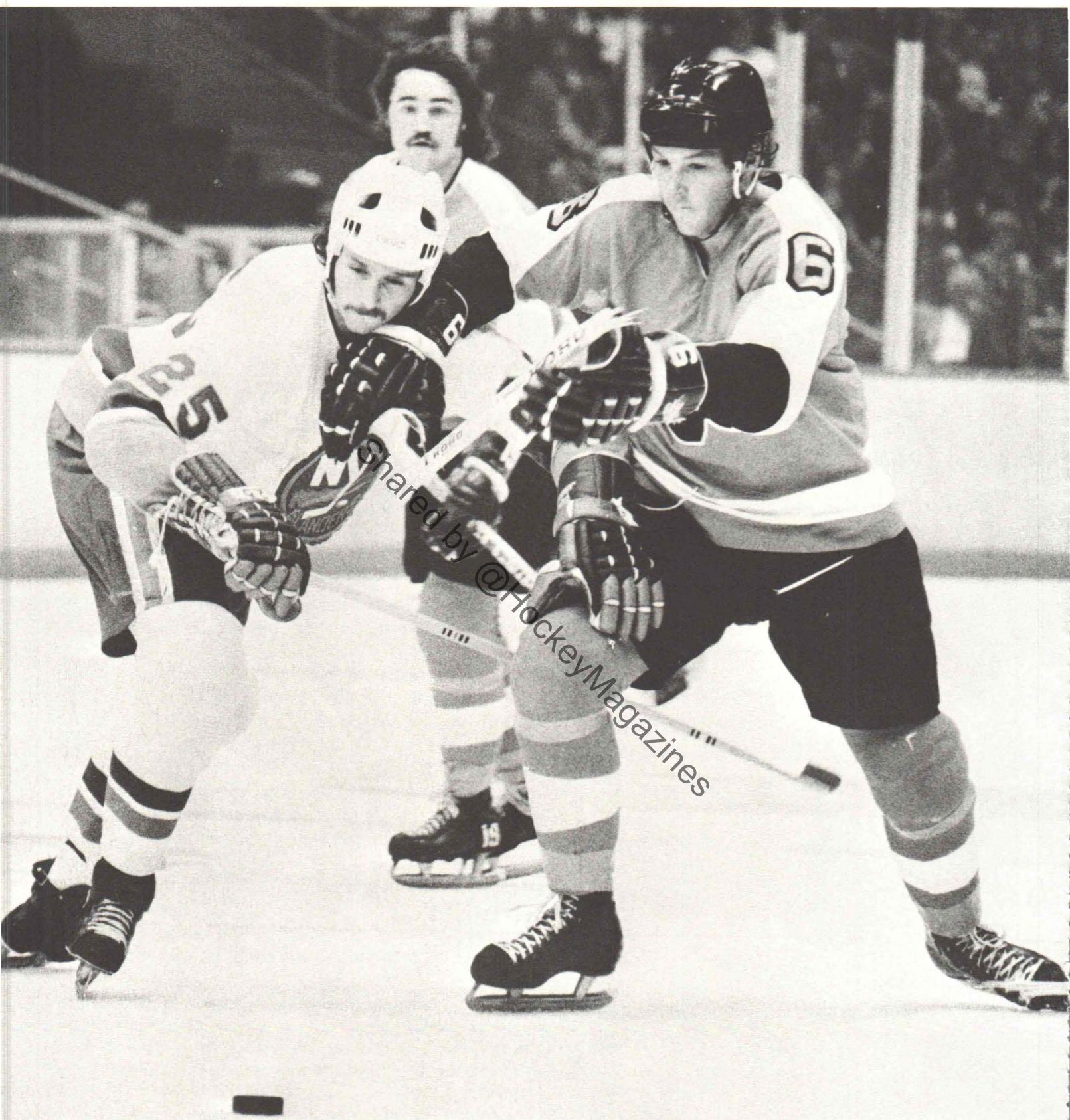
For days Philadelphia was Euphoria, U.S.A. People danced in the streets, honked horns, embraced the Flyers during the victory parade. "CITY GOES WILD WITH JOY" announced *The Inquirer* with an eight-column headline.

"I dreamt about this for 25 years," said the jubilant Shero.

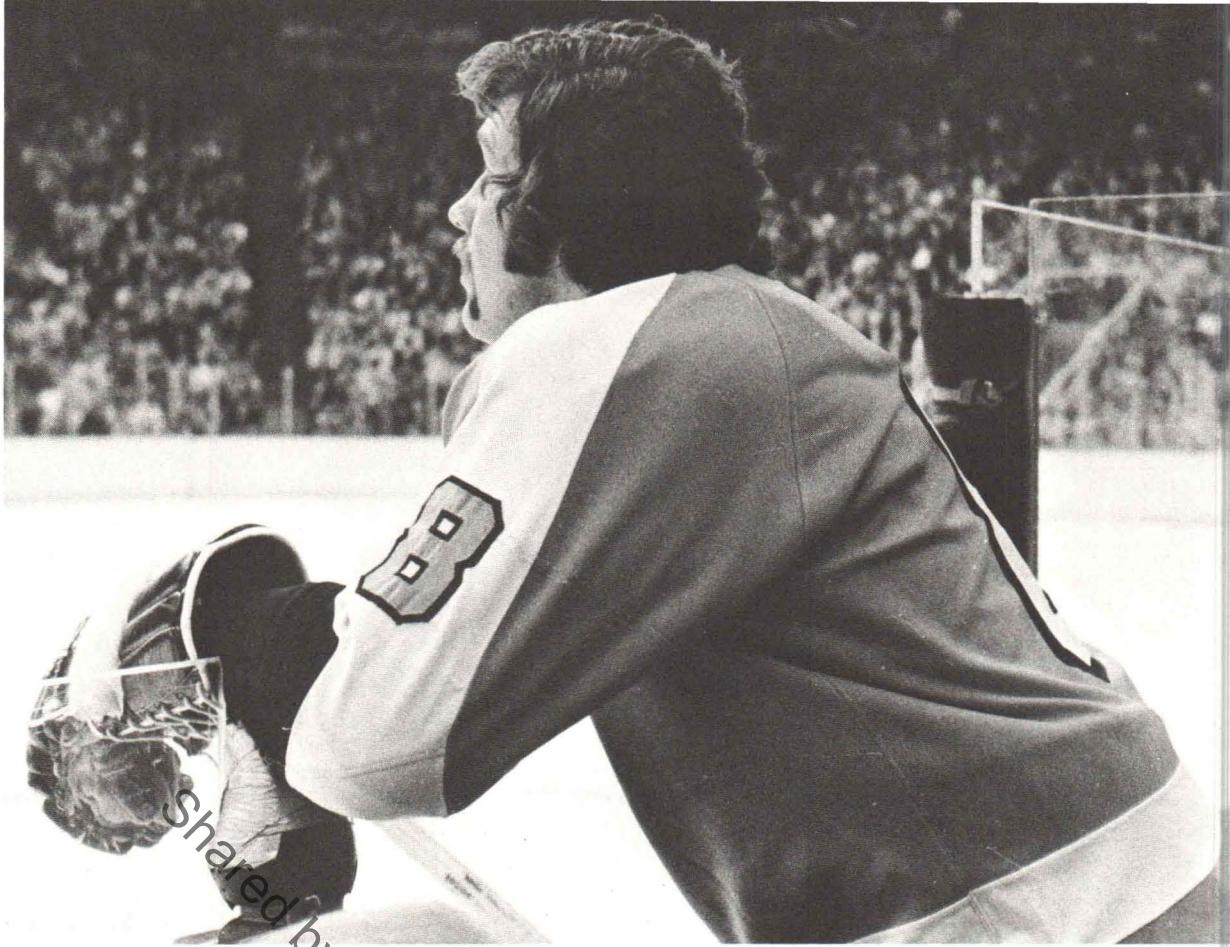
One fan summed up the prevailing mood. "I've lived in Philly all my life and it's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen."

Arnie Fox, a transplanted New Yorker, put it another way. "I spent 25 years rooting for the Rangers and got nothing—not a first-place club and not a Stanley Cup. But I've been in Philly for five years and now I've got everything!"

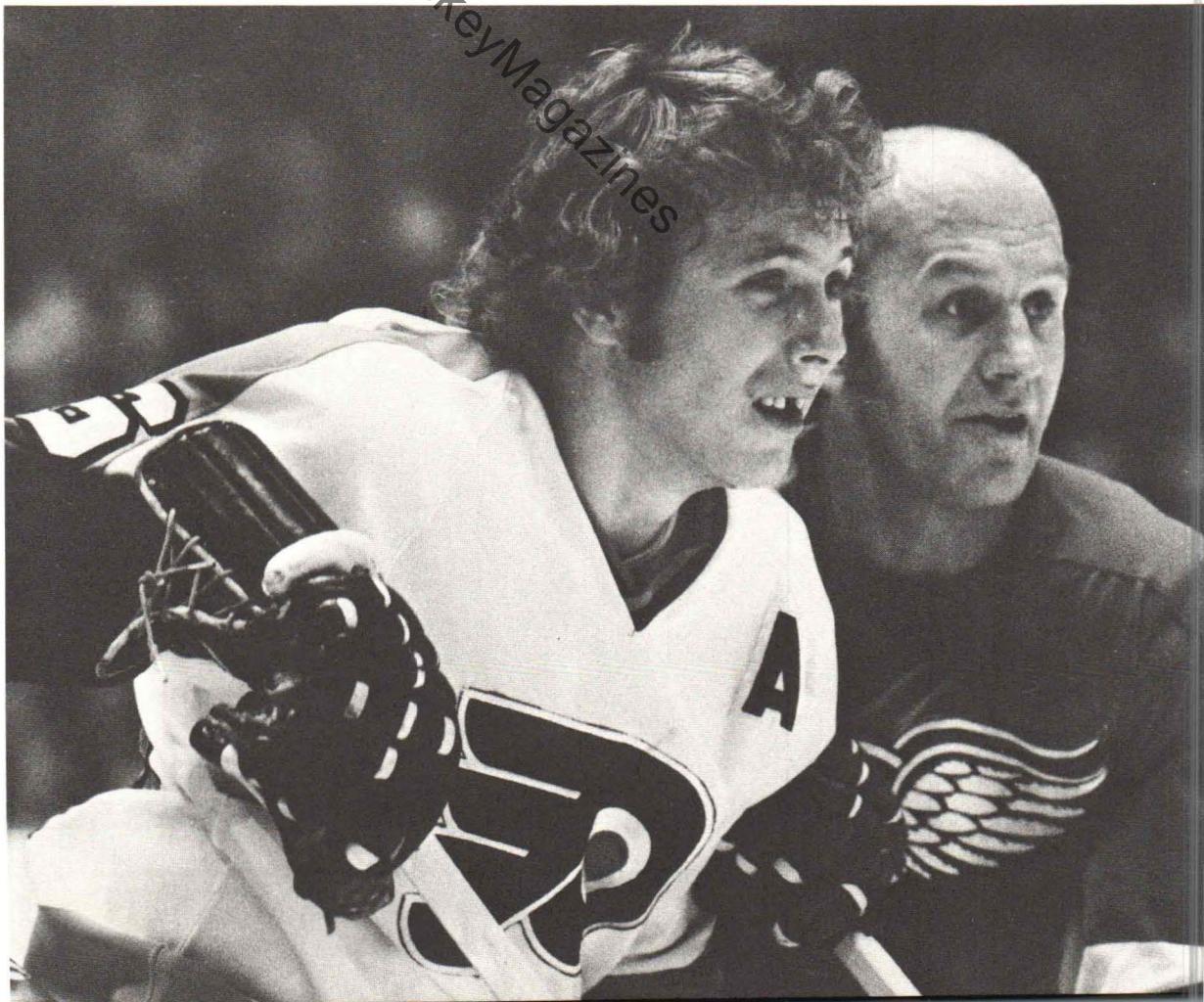
The Flyers had reached the end of the rainbow.



Andre "Moose" Dupont outmuscles Islander Dave Lewis for control of the puck.



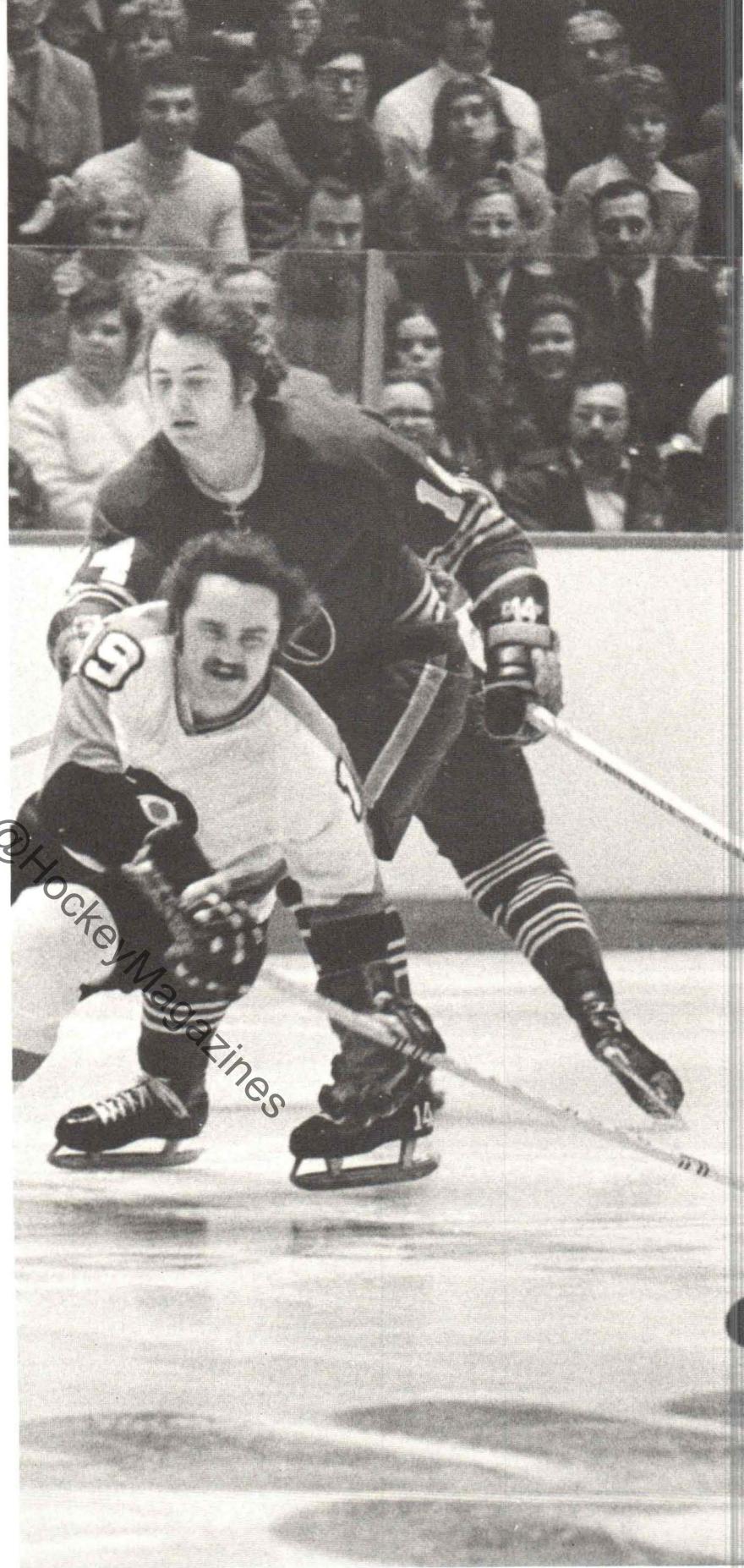
Dave Schultz in a familiar place, the penalty box.



the mad



squad



fred shero--

Philadelphia, the city of losers, the town that couldn't even keep a roof on its own sports arena; a place where fans throw snowballs at Santa Claus.

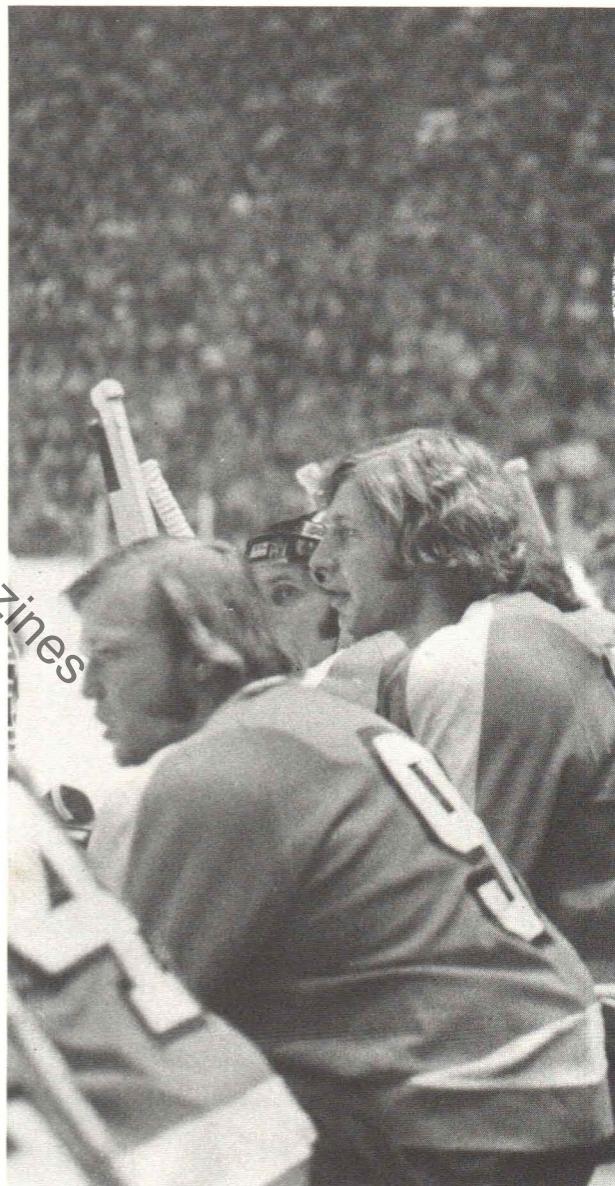
That was the past. In 1971, Fred Shero came along and everything changed. Now, Philly has a Stanley Cup and a celebrity coach no one can quite understand.

Called everything from the Casey Stengel of hockey to a latter-day W.C. Fields, Shero is a mystery to Philadelphia sports writers, his players and even his family. Captain Bobby Clarke, when asked to "define Freddie," responded, "We all try to figure him out, figure out what he's trying to do, but you just can't . . . we understand the fact that everything he does is aimed at helping us win, but we just don't understand some of the things he does."

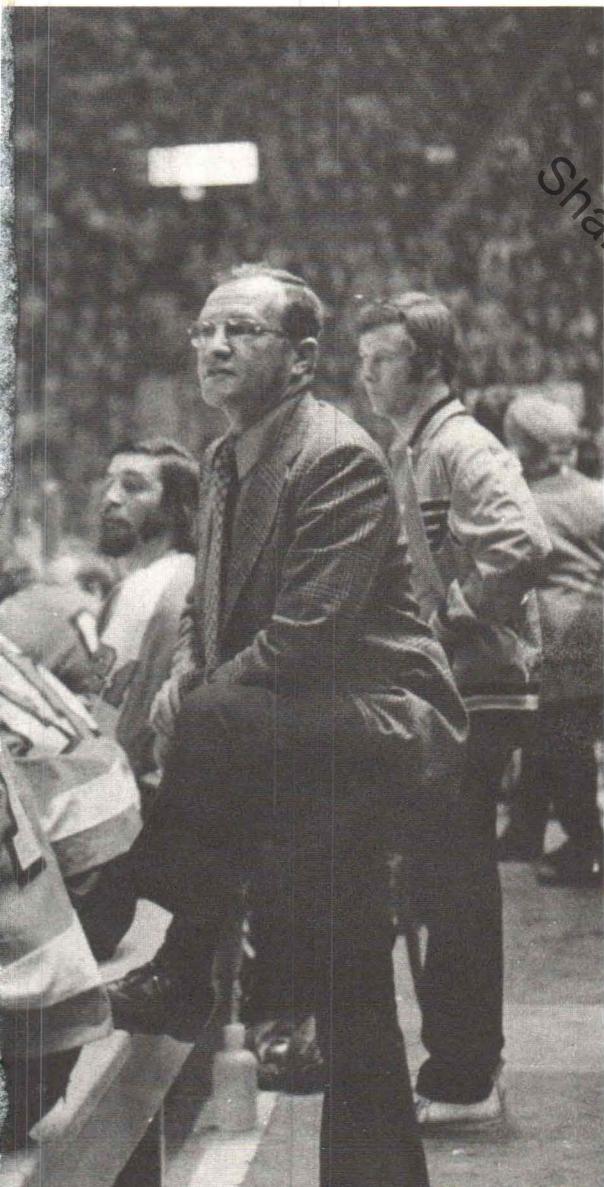
Shero is an emotional man, although his sentiments are almost locked deep inside him. Even after great wins, Shero likes to sit by himself, perhaps concentrating, and conquering his emotions so they won't be visible to the outside world. Shero often expresses himself with a personal note placed in a player's locker or a handwritten quote on the locker room blackboard. After counterattacking to a victory over the New York Rangers from behind a 4-1 deficit, Shero scribbled the score in the locker room with a sign reading: "This game will never be forgotten by me. Money doesn't live forever. But great moments do."

At the beginning of each month and during special moments in the season, Shero uses the blackboard to write 'meaningful' notes to his players. One day during the season, he wrote: "Those who live on past glories will have only the glories of the past to live on." His players look, listen and love the man.

Bernie Parent, the Flyer's amazing goalie, was named the Stanley Cup's Most Valuable Player, after Clarke, the other prime contender, announced that no one but Parent deserved the award. At the official presentation, Parent took the key to the car which went along with the prize, said he needed 23 more for his teammates,



coaching genius



and handed it to his mentor, Fred Shero. That morning, Shero did show emotion allowing more tears to flow than perhaps ever before during his reign in the city.

The Flyers have responded to their perfectionist coach with dogged determinism, tough drive and the Stanley Cup. But perhaps more important in this day of superstar cry babies, the Flyers have a deep respect for their coach. And the team has become a strong unit, labeled by some as a "hockey family." Shero has explained he teaches his players "to live, love and labor together—not necessarily in that order."

"Freddie treats you like a man, which a lot of coaches won't do," Clarke says. "He won't tell you you can't have a bottle of beer, or that you have to be in bed every night at ten. We're adults, we know what we have to do to win hockey games. And he doesn't ream you out in public. That's really it. He respects you."

Shero has a strict policy never to criticize a player openly; if a player is loafing, he'll find out what the coach thinks, but in Shero's way.

For 13 years starting in 1957 Shero coached minor league teams in St. Paul, Omaha and Buffalo. Prior to that time he had played for the New York Rangers. As a coach he led six teams to first place finishes and five to playoff championships. Surprisingly, Shero was ignored by NHL teams like the North Stars and the Sabres which had opportunities to assess his value.

Finally, in 1971, Ed Snider gave Shero a group of loosely organized men who just hadn't made it with the big-boy teams. Equipped with a system based on the discipline of Russia's national team, Shero began to build.

Shero has a Stanley Cup, a hefty raise and a city at his feet, but he won't even stop to enjoy it. He'll continue that never ending search for new ways, new ideas, new techniques; he'll keep reaching for perfection. And what makes the man do all this? You'd have to delve deep into Freddie's psyche to find out—and no one is quite certain how to do that.



bill barber

It was not the stuff of which hockey dreams are made. Bill Barber had arrived at the Philadelphia Flyers training camp in September 1972 fully expecting to make the varsity at left wing or center. A month later he had a ticket to Richmond, Virginia and a command to learn some hockey in the minors.

He learned fast, scored nine goals and five assists in 11 games and was back in the NHL before he could say Freddie Sher. "Bill was brought to Philadelphia," said coach Sher, "in an emergency when Bill Flett sprained his knee. When Barber played so well for us, we couldn't send him back to Richmond."

Not only did he play well, but by mid-season he was being touted as a serious candidate for the Calder (Rookie of the Year) Trophy. His competition included the eventual winner, Steve Vickers of the Rangers. "Bill did more for us," said manager Keith Allen, "than Vickers did for the Rangers."

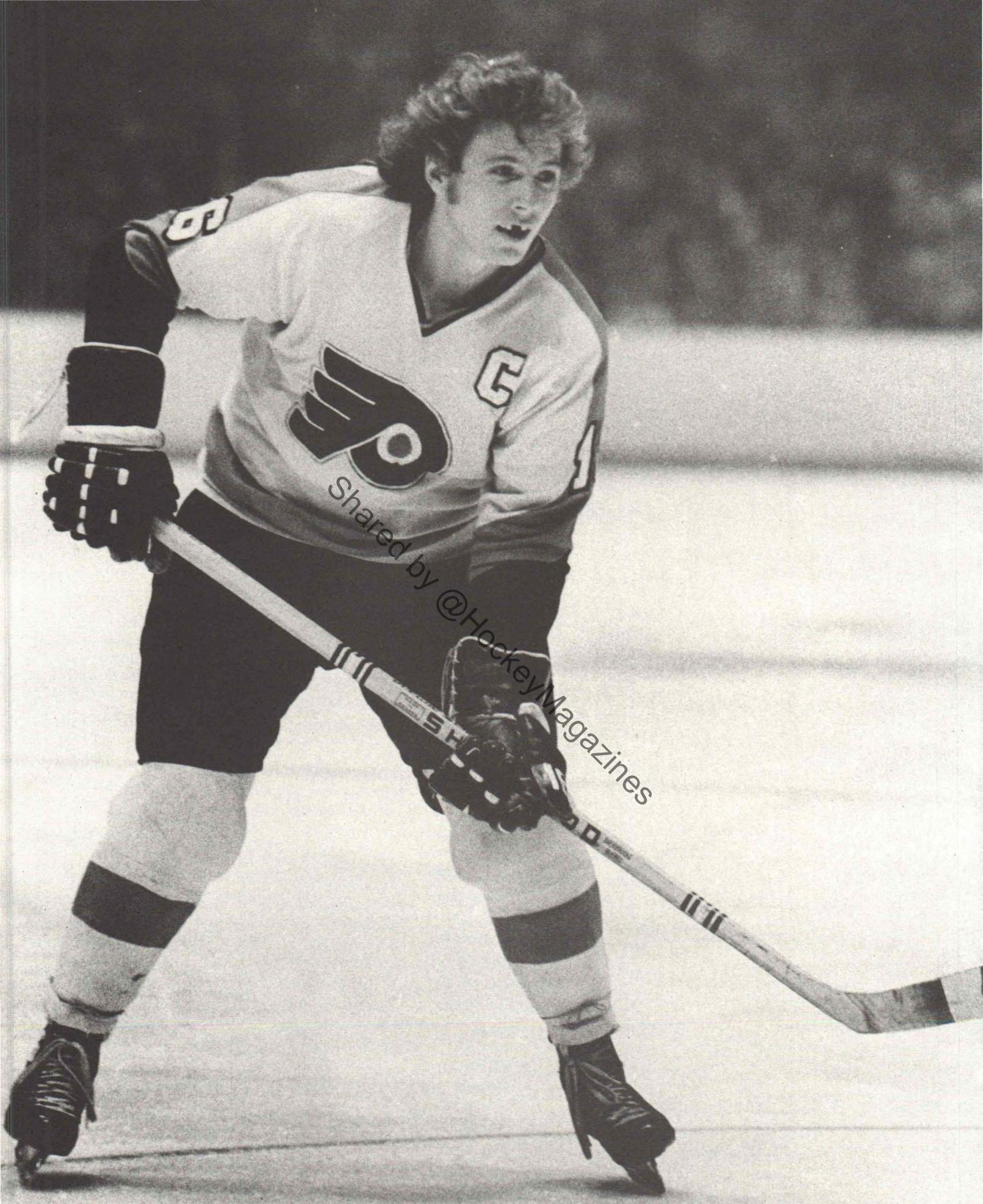
Barber scored 30 goals and 34 assists for 64 points in 69 games. He wanted the Calder Trophy just as any rookie would want it, but he was happy to settle for the majors. "My only goal," he said, "was to make the NHL and play with Philadelphia."

Judging by his 1972-73 performance there was little doubt that he has reached his goal.

"The first time Barber stepped on the ice," said coach Sher, "you could see the class all over him. He reminded me of when I first played with Andy Bathgate of the Rangers, who had been temporarily sent down to Cleveland when I played minor league hockey with the Barons. As soon as Bathgate stepped on the ice you knew he was a hockey player and was going to be better than the rest of us. Barber has the same sort of class and finesse with the puck and the hockey brains that Bathgate did."

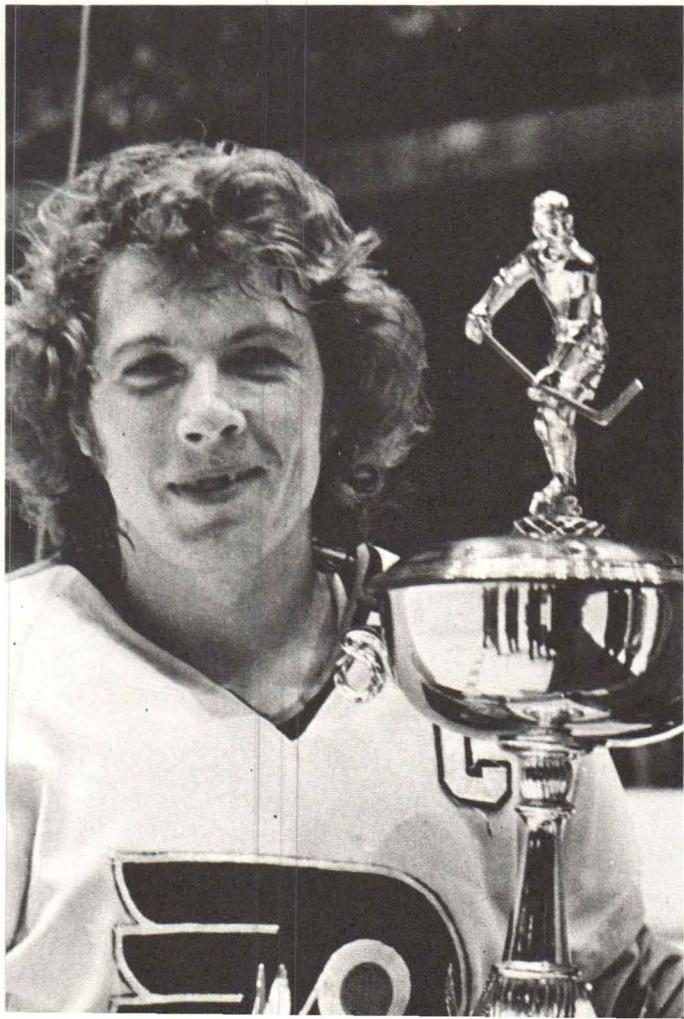
The feeling among the Flyers' high command is that the sky is the limit for Bill.

Bill Barber, holds his ground against husky Ranger Ted Irvine.



the remarkable bobby clarke

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Prior to the start of the 1972–73 hockey season it would have been inconceivable to rate any centerman in the NHL better than Phil Esposito of the Boston Bruins, let alone a 23-year-old diabetic from Flin Flon, Manitoba.

"It's not that we're overrating him," said coach Fred Shero. "Maybe we're underrating him. Bobby Clarke could possibly be the greatest hockey player in the world."

Clarke was not the leading scorer in 1972–73; he finished second to Esposito. But when the returns were in for the Hart Trophy, awarded to the most valuable player in the NHL, Bobby was ahead of them all, including the fabulous Esposito.

The first evidence that Clark had achieved superstardom was recorded during the 1972 Team Canada-Russia series when Bobby played on a line with Ron Ellis and Paul Henderson. "In my opinion," said Team Canada coach Harry Sinden, "they were the best line we had."

One critic of the series gave Clarke top billing in his recapitulation of the Team Canada triumph: "When selecting the best two-way centerman of those eight games, it would be impossible to overlook Clarke. He skated hundreds of miles up and down those rinks; he checked the Russians right out of their long woolen underwear; he killed off Canadian penalties and, offensively, he centered Canada's most reliable forward line."

Like many of his Team Canada teammates, Clarke suffered a severe emotional letdown after returning from Moscow and the NHL grind. He scored only four goals in the Flyers' first 13 games and seven weeks after the season had started he had only nine goals in 23 games. He was in 24th place among the scoring leaders and appeared null and void as a factor in the point parade.

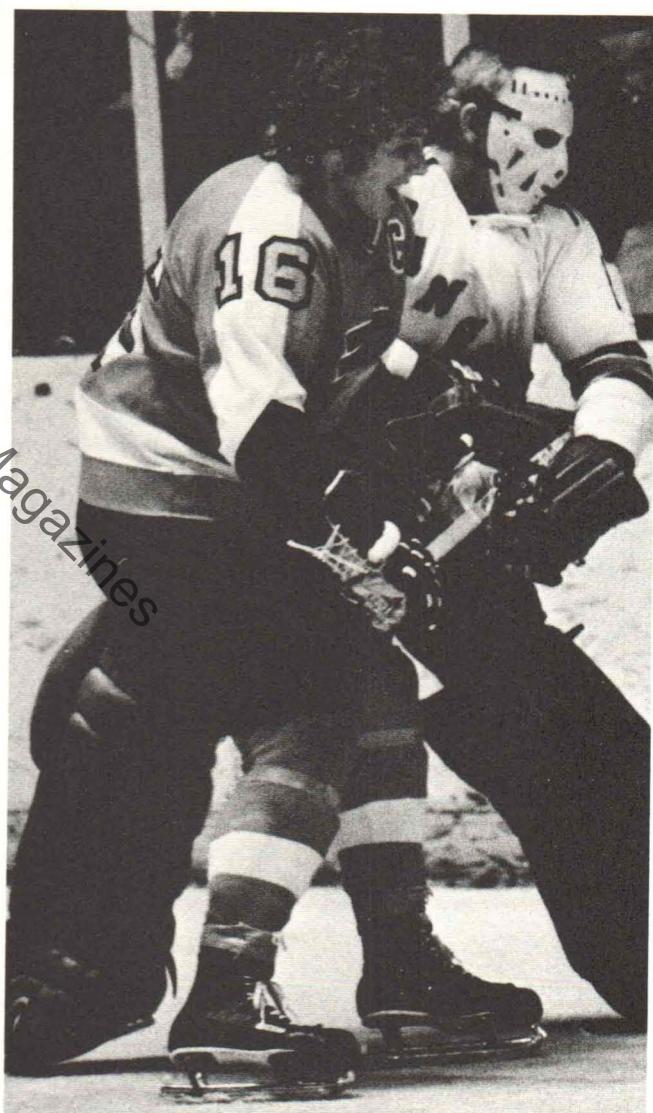
It was then that Bobby seemed to get his second wind, and like Popeye gulping down a can of spinach, Clarke turned into an unstoppable strong man, scoring goals in bunches and driving the enemy against, if not up, the wall.

By January 1973 the Montreal Canadiens were feeling the effects of Bobby's quick stick and tenacious checking. Exasperated, Scotty Bowman, the Canadiens' coach finally exploded about what he insinuated were Clarke's less than legal tactics.

Clarke was as nonplussed about Bowman's needles as he was about the Canadiens defensemen. "If I wasn't doing something," snapped Clarke, "he wouldn't have noticed me. I didn't get any penalties so I couldn't have been doing much dirty."

If nothing else Bowman made the mistake of antagonizing Clarke. When the Flyers met the Canadiens on February 17, 1973 at The Forum in Montreal, Bobby blitzed three goals, the necessary margin for Philadelphia's significant 7-6 victory; one which virtually assured them of a playoff berth.

Bobby Clarke checks New York goalie Ed Giacomin who has left his crease.





Two superstars in an All-Star game.



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Captain Bobby Clarke starts out from behind his own net to lead a rush up ice.

To a man, Clarke's teammates agreed that their young captain was Hart Trophy timber. "Whenever Bobby comes to the rink," said teammate Bill Flett, "he comes to play; and he goes all out in every game. He's an excellent captain because he knows how to give and take criticism. He'll never embarrass anybody, or holler at him. But if a player felt that something wasn't going right and mentioned it to him, Bobby would sit down and talk about it—and listen."

Bobby would be the first to admit that he still has plenty to learn. Once, coach Shero reprimanded him when Clarke skinned a pass to a covered teammate at a moment when Bobby, himself, had the better scoring opportunity.

"I told Bobby that he was wrong," said Shero. "I told him when he has the puck he's in charge. He never made that mistake again. Clarke is so honest that he does more work in a half-hour than some players do in three hours."

The Flyers realized this as far back as the summer of 1972 when they began talking contract with Howard Casper, Bobby's lawyer. Casper visited the Flyers' brass, made his demand and emerged with a five-year contract at a reported \$600,000.

Actually, Casper obtained a fair price for Clarke's services, considering that Bobby got better and better as the 1972-73 campaign progressed, finishing the season with 37 goals, 67 assists and a total of 104 points. Perhaps more significant was the fact that he accomplished this although he is a diabetic; an affliction that he continually tries to minimize.

"Diabetes," he insisted, "hasn't stopped me from doing anything. I want to live, so I take care of myself. Diabetes never bothered me when I played junior hockey back home in Flin Flon so I can't see why it should affect me in the NHL."

Judging by the Hart Trophy sitting over his mantelpiece, and his recent exploits it hasn't bothered him at all.



Gary Dornhoefer in front of the net.

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gary dornhoefer

The fact that Gary Dornhoefer has remained a member of the Flyers' original cast since Day One in 1967 is a tribute to medical science and good old Canadian-American gumption, of which Gary has a surplus.

Conservatively speaking, the tall right wing from Kitchener, Ontario, has been a one-man casualty ward. In Philadelphia's maiden NHL season Gary tangled with Barclay Plager, the St. Louis Blues' enforcer and emerged with a broken ankle. It appeared that Gary had won the bout until then. He had Plager in a head-lock when someone tripped and fell on his leg, cracking the ankle. End of season for Dornhoefer.

A year later he broke his other ankle when an Oakland goalie swung his big, fat stick at Dornhoefer just as Gary was skating past the net. In 1969-70 a pinched nerve in his back and a sore knee put a crimp in his scoring ambitions.

The sore knee, originally diagnosed as a bad bruise was found to be a torn cartilage which required an operation. In the 1970-71 season his knee still was weak.

It wasn't until 1972-73 that the turnaround came. Gary played 77 out of 78 games, scored a personal high of 79 points, third-highest on the club, and seemed to have beaten the injury jinx.

Dornhoefer's high-water mark was achieved on April 10, 1973 in the fifth game of the Flyers-North Stars opening playoff round. The series was tied at two games apiece and the game tied, 2-2, when in sudden-death overtime, Gary did his thing.

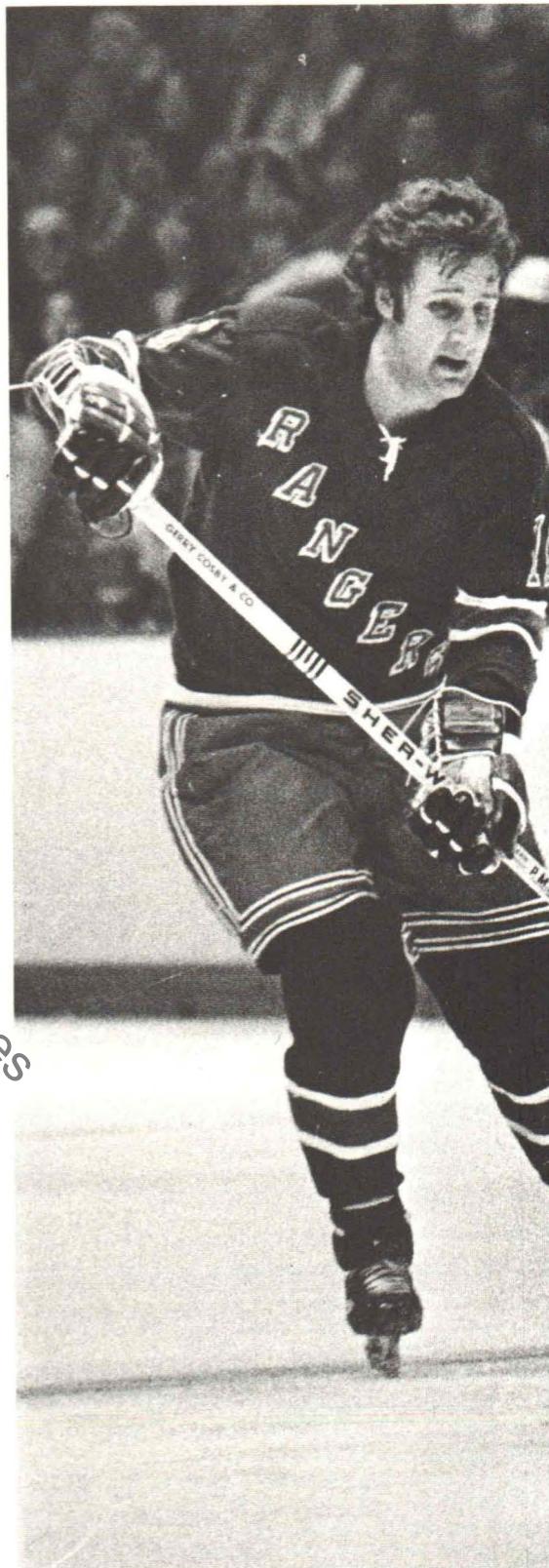
He sped along the left wing just past the eight minute mark of the first sudden-death period while three retreating Minnesota skaters tried to head him off at the pass. Cesare Maniago, the North Stars' goalie, braced himself.

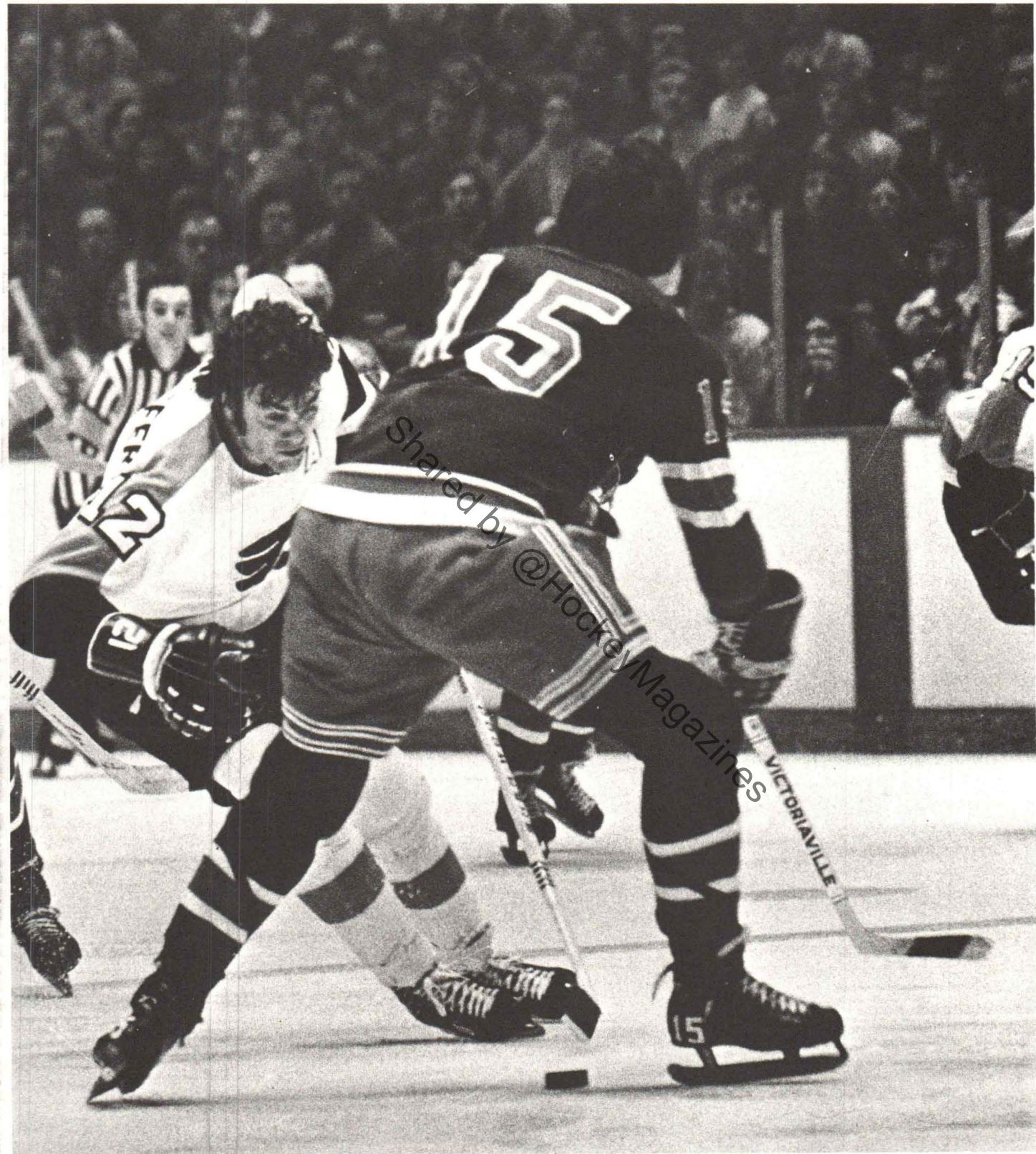
"The next thing I knew," said Gary, "I was a defenseman. They had two men there and tried poking the puck so I put the puck on my backhand and let it go good and high."

It was high enough and good enough to beat Maniago and give the Flyers a 3-2 edge in the game and the series. Philadelphia went on to win the series and Dornhoefer's goal was acclaimed as the turning point.

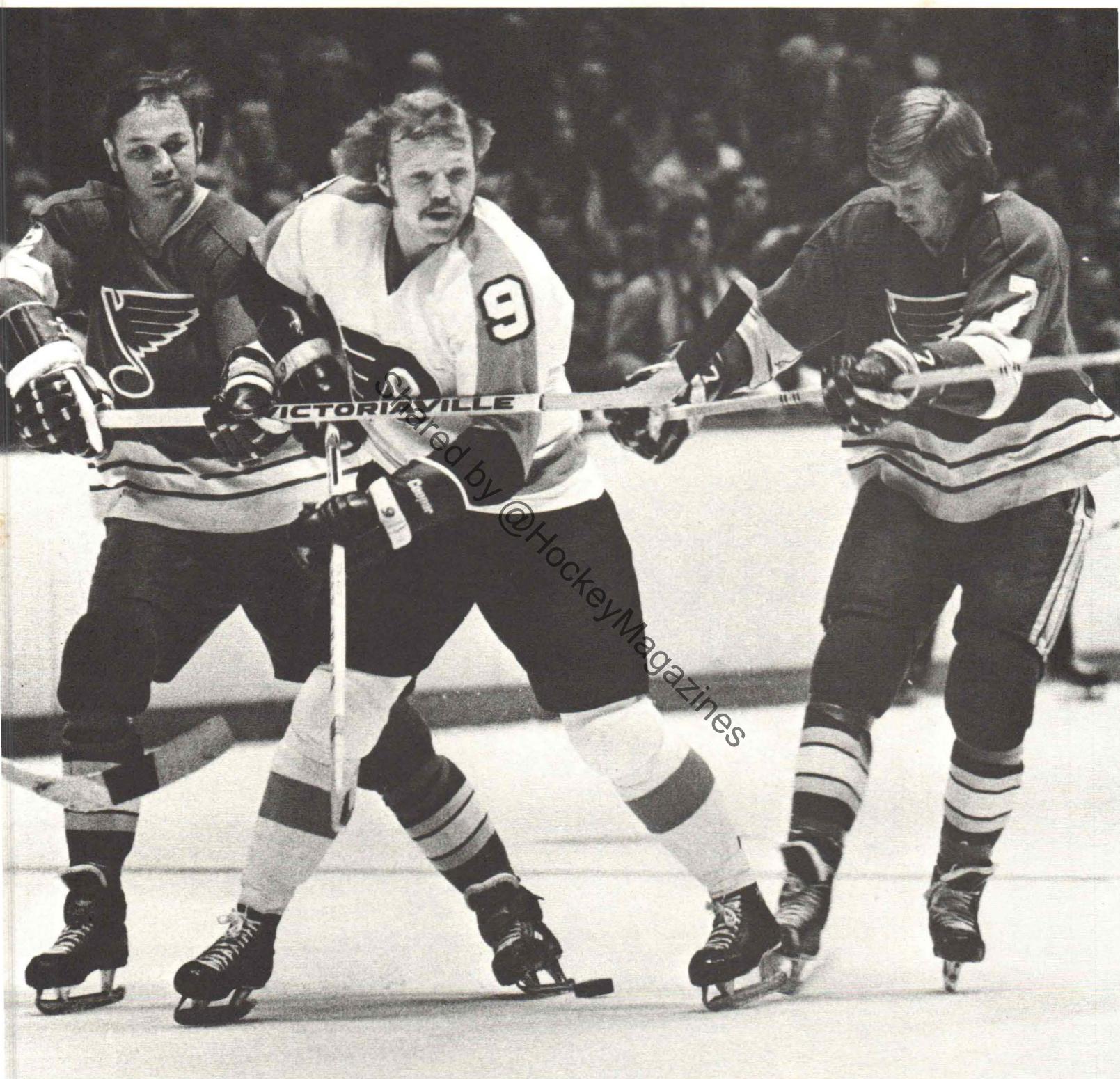
At last, justice was triumphing for the gritty Flyer. It was not only his productive 1972-73 record, or the sudden death goal but rather Dornhoefer's overall feeling of confidence reinforced by his nomination to the 1973 West Division All-Star team lineup.

Now that he's broken the injury jinx, it appears that Dornhoefer will be good for more glorious nights in a Philadelphia jersey. At least that's the expressed hope of coach Sherwood.





Right wing Gary Dornhoefer tries to penetrate the New York defense and succeeds in passing the puck between Jim Neilson's legs.



Bob "Battleship" Kelly is another brawling member of the Flyer Mad Squad who intimidates a la Dave Schultz.

bob kelly

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With men who know the Flyers best, Bob Kelly came of age as a big-leaguer on the night of January 30, 1971. The truculent left wing affectionately known as "Mad Dog," scored a goal and an assist that night against the Rangers, helping Philadelphia to a lusty, 5-2 victory.

It's no secret that the Flyers did *not* sign the 5-foot-11, 198-pound Kelly because he could dazzle the enemy with his footwork. His fists are as much his assets as his stickhandling and shooting. He was one of the first of the raw, tough young Flyers and makes no bones about his aggressive instincts.

Kelly was the 32nd player selected in the 1970 amateur draft and knew what he had to do to make the Flyers. Like his successor, Fred Shero, the then coach Vic Stasiuk relished a good fighter, so Bob came to camp swinging. He made the big club and never played in the minors.

To some sophisticates his style is called "Ontario Crude," but he is an enforcer first, in the bruising style of the Mad Squad. The hockey world learned this conclusively in March 1973 when United Press International wired a photograph around the continent showing Kelly pulverizing Gene Carr of the Rangers to the ice with a flurry of vicious lefts and conclusive rights.

"I hate to lose a fight," Kelly says, "but I hate to lose a game even more."



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Rick MacLeish is a productive scorer with 88 goals and 111 assists in his first two full seasons with the Flyers.

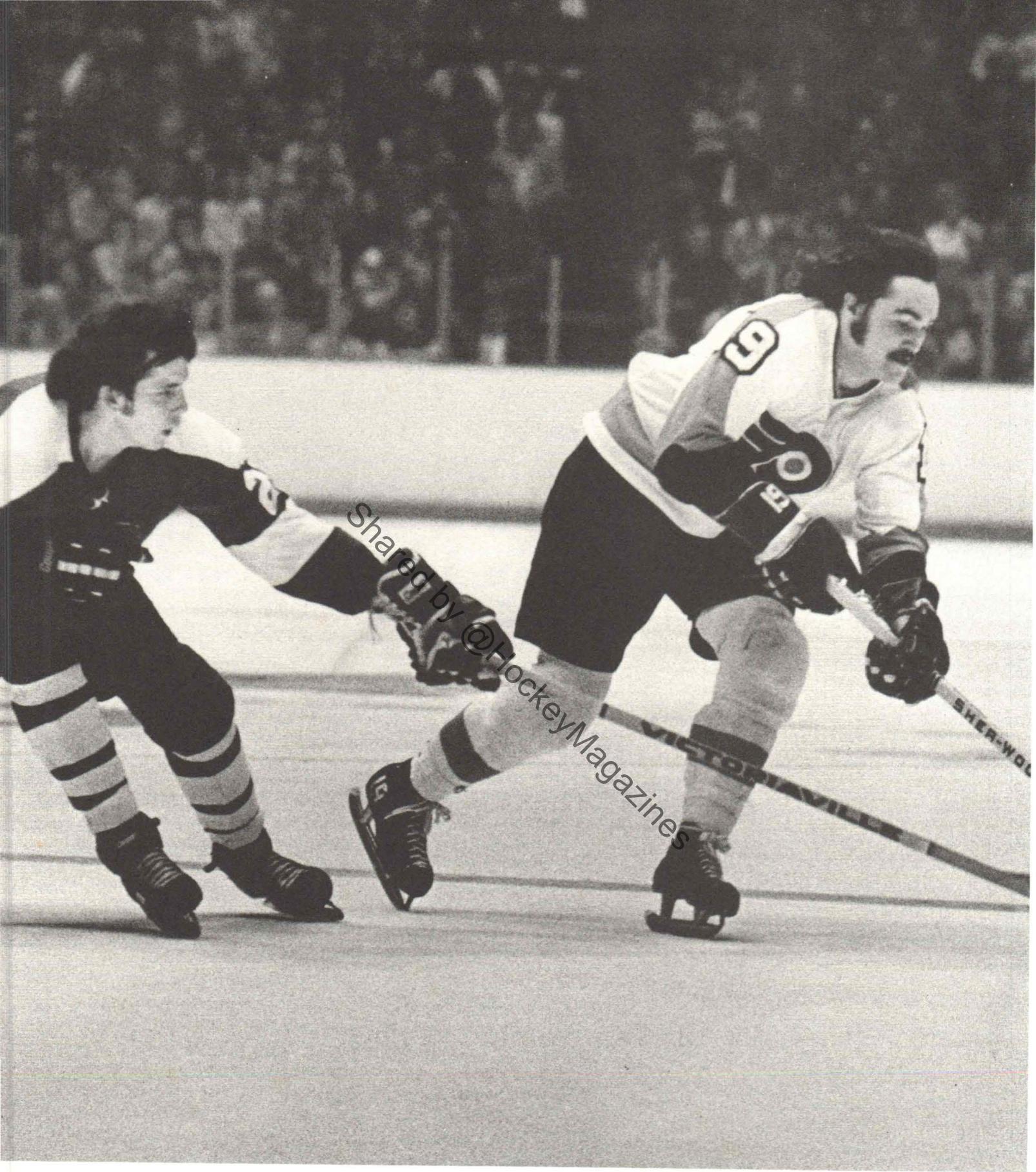
rick macleish

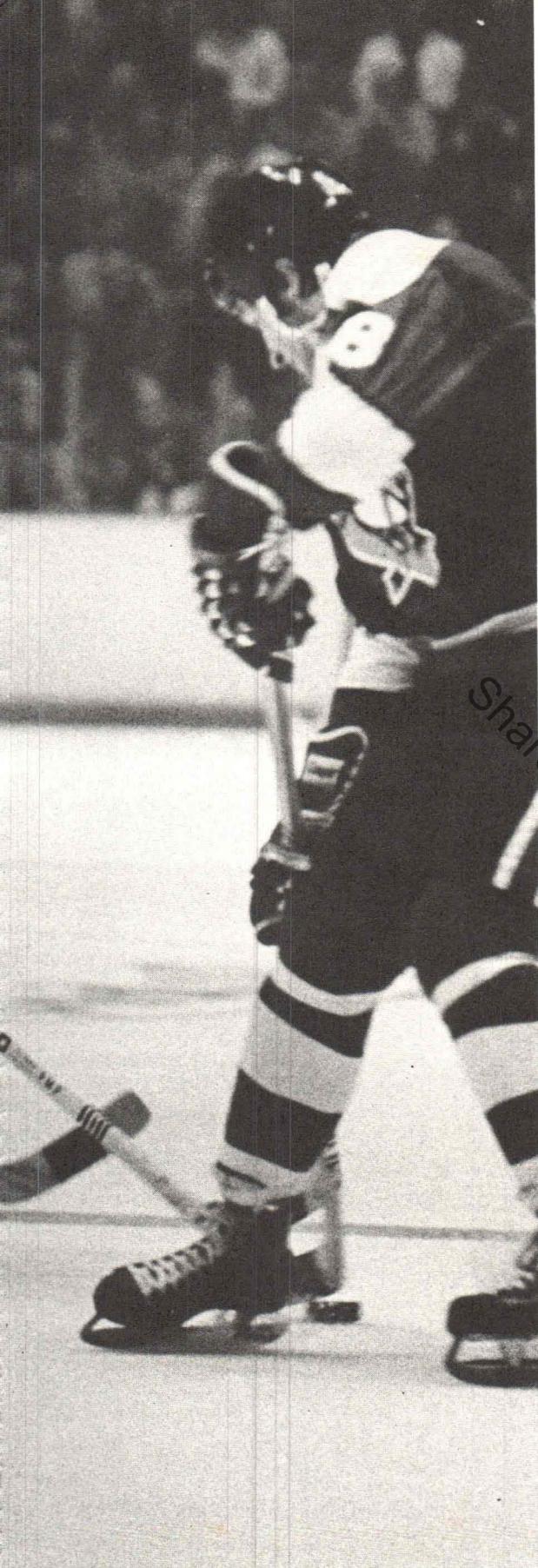
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It was February 13, 1973, a night when Rick MacLeish was preparing to hold court for the dozen writers who would await him in the visitors' dressing room at Nassau Coliseum. There were just a few seconds before the match against the Islanders would end and Rick would take the spotlight.

He had delivered four big goals for the Flyers—a team record—and unquestionably was the Philadelphia hero in the 8–2 rout of the Islanders. But just before the final buzzer sounded a slapshot emerged out of a flurry of skaters and smashed squarely into MacLeish's mouth.

Blood spurted forth, staining the milky white ice and MacLeish limped off, several teeth jarred loose. He was a mess when the Coliseum doctors zeroed in on the multiplicity of wounds. Rick required 18 stitches embroidered inside his lip and 14 more decorating the outside. "Your teeth all right?" asked goalie Favell.





Rick MacLeish tries to split the Pittsburgh defense as two defenders converge on him.

"Two are broken," mumbled MacLeish, "but not all the way."

The 5-foot-11, 174-pound MacLeish is a throwback among NHL scorers since he employs the age-old wrist shot, rather than the more recent and less dependable slapshot, as his major offensive weapon. Many of the more cerebral types such as Red Berenson and Jean Ratelle have emphasized the wrist shot. MacLeish can't understand why more don't do it.

"If a Dennis Hull, for instance, worked his way in instead of shooting as soon as he gets over the blue line," said MacLeish, "he'd have more goals."

Rick speaks from experience. He startled the NHL by scoring 50 goals in his first full season and promises even better as long as he can avoid flying slapshots-in-the-mouth and assorted other ailments.

Billy Smith of the Islanders still is talking about that night in February 1973 when MacLeish emerged as a marauder; and so is coach Fred Shero.

"That night," said Shero, "Rick was like a man among boys. He pulled the puck away from the defense and controlled it. He's got a tremendous future; and with Bobby Clarke gives us the best one-two punch in the league."



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Bernie Parent keeps his eye on the puck approaching the Flyer net.

bernie parent-- goalie supreme

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Pete Stemkowski sat in the gloom of the defeated New York Rangers' dressing room. The tragic seventh game of their semi-final series with the Philadelphia Flyers was over. The Ranger season was a memory—the Flyers had a date to keep with the Stanley Cup.

"Parent was the difference," Stemmer muttered darkly. "If we'd just got the odd shot by him, it would've been a different ballgame."

Parent had been the difference. The masked bandit had stymied the Rangers throughout the series, thwarting the New Yorkers' finest rushes and making them scratch and bite for the few tallies they did manage to poke past him.

In fact, Parent was the difference for Philly throughout the entire season.



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Goalie Bernie Parent makes a stick save, ignoring pressure from the Rangers' Rod Gilbert (7) and Jean Ratelle (19).

"Bernie gave us great confidence," said captain Bobby Clarke. "We never had to worry whether he was on or off. He was on all the time.

The mustachioed Parent's statistics seem to bear this incredible claim of consistency out. He appeared in 73 of the Flyers' 78 regular season games, chalking up a dozen shutouts, a Scroogish goals against average of 1.89, and a Vezina Trophy partnership with Chicago Black Hawks' goaltender, Tony Esposito. The coveted goaltender's award could easily have been Parent's alone had the Flyers not decided to rest him in the last few Flyer games.

But why be greedy? Co-ownership of the Vezina isn't half bad when you've also been named as the first All-Star team's goaltender, won the Conn Smythe Award as MVP of the playoffs, and last, but not least, had your name inscribed on the big cup.

Parent originally came up to the big leagues through the Boston Bruins' organization. After playing briefly with the Beantowners for two seasons, he was claimed by Philadelphia in the 1967 expansion draft. Parent teamed with Doug Favell to give the Flyers the most promising net-minding duo in the league. The Philadelphia goal scorers, however, were dreadful. So when Rick MacLeish became available in 1970-71, Parent was shipped to Toronto in a three team deal.

In Toronto Parent teamed with the aging Jacques Plante, "my idol," according to Bernie. "He always gave me good tips. He improved my balance by getting me to keep all my body weight on my right foot, not my left, during a play, and he also taught me how to determine my exact position by banging my stick or my catching glove against the goalposts. I used to have my eyes off the play and look around to see where I was, and sometimes I gave up a goal because I wasn't looking at the puck."

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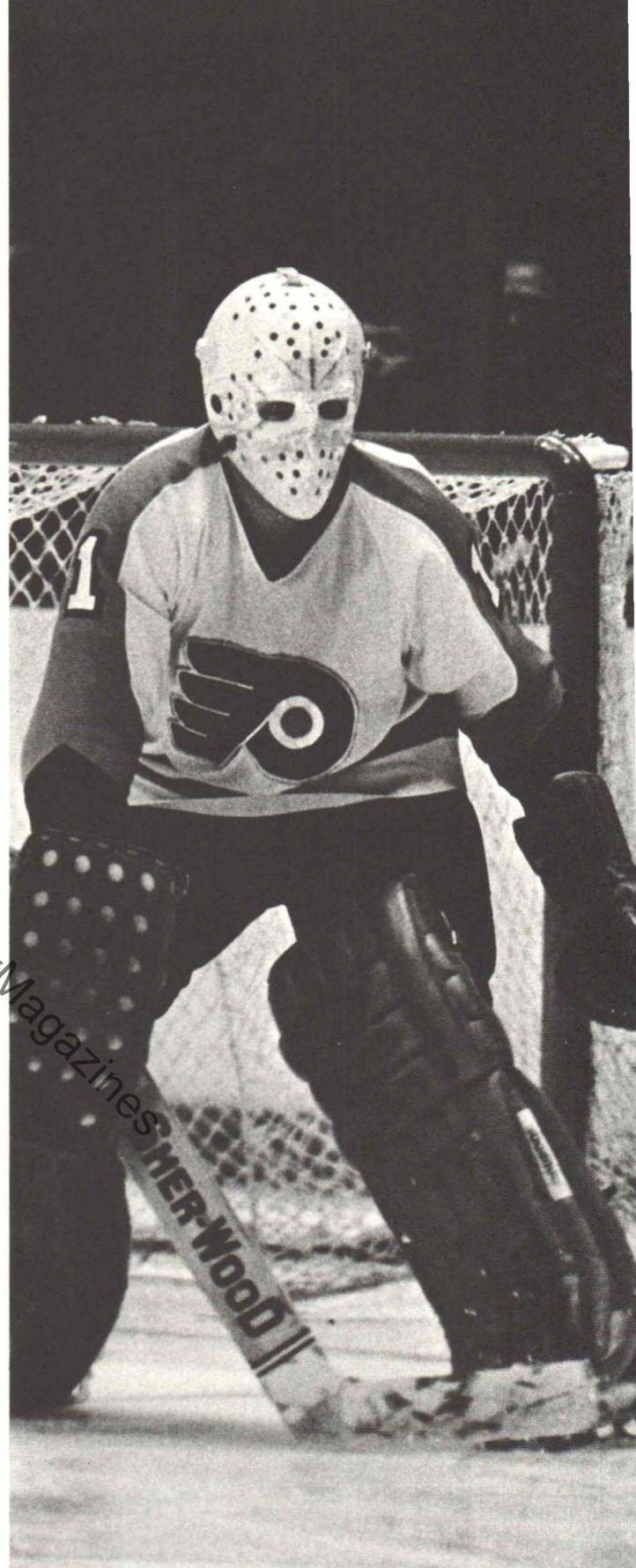
Parent's wife, a native Philadelphian, was miserable in Toronto. So when the rival World Hockey Association offered Parent a ticket back to the states, he jumped at it, signing with the Philadelphia Blazers for the five shutout figure of \$600,000.

The following season was an up and down one for Parent, and his goals against average. He was the winningest goalie in the WHA with 33 victories despite a 3.61 GAA, and his wife was happy, but there were financial problems. In the midst of the WHA playoffs, Parent's \$500,000 escrow fund was found to be empty. Disgusted, Parent jumped back to the waiting arms of the Toronto Maple Leafs with the understanding that he'd be traded to Philadelphia for Doug Favell.

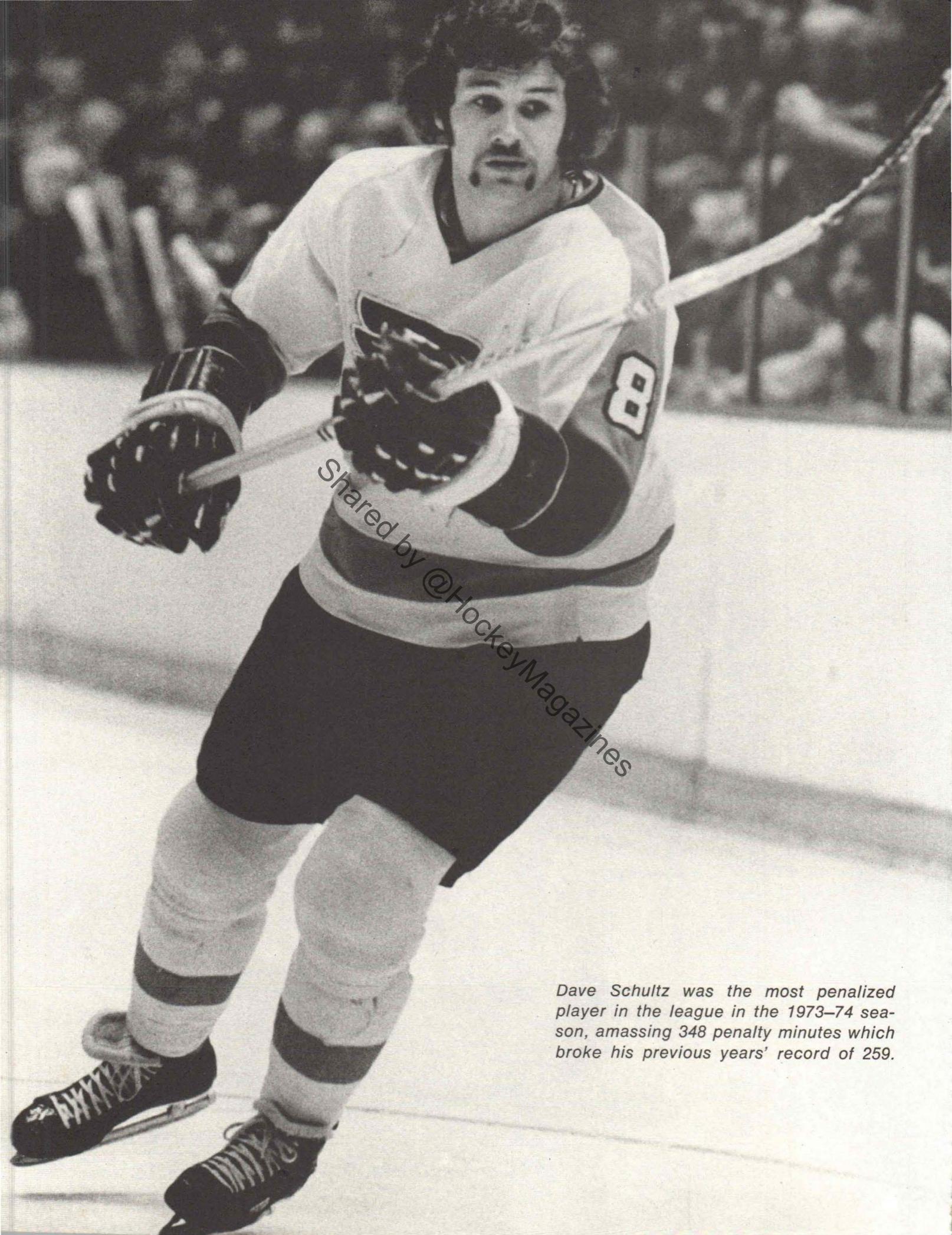
Parent proceeded to slash 100 enemy goals off the Flyer's previous season totals and injected his teammates with a feeling of invincibility. It worked both ways as the Philly defense responded by building a China Wall around their prodigal goalie.

"In the old days I used to have 13 or 14 rough saves every game," said a beaming Bernie. "Thanks to those guys, now it's down to four or five."

Sometimes it's less than that—maybe because Parent makes them all look easy.







Dave Schultz was the most penalized player in the league in the 1973-74 season, amassing 348 penalty minutes which broke his previous years' record of 259.

dave schultz

Shashby @HockeyMagazine

There are many lingering images of the Rangers-Flyers 1974 playoff series that still drift through the wounded psyches of frustrated Blueshirt fans. Of course there's Gary Dornhoefer's shocking "Twilight Zone-ish" winning goal, Ed Van Impe's "phantom goal" in the second game, and the hooded Bernie Parent, lurking ominously before his net.

But the most chilling memory, is that of a rampaging Dave Schultz pummeling a wobbly Dale Rolfe until the long, lean defenseman resembled one of those rubber chickens.

The way Flyer coach Fred Shero sees it, Schultz was just doing his job.

"There are three things that make a hockey player," said the no-nonsense mentor. "Speed, skill, and strength. Schultz realizes he doesn't have speed or skill, so what's he here for? To beat up the other guy!"

Schultz demonstrated that he fully grasped his role in Shero's scheme of things by taking on Brad Park (twice), Rolfe, Pete Stemkowski, and Ron Harris. He also tried his best to run Rod Gilbert into the second balcony. When Emile Francis had the audacity to take exception to Schultz's bludgeon tactics, the bullyboy not only challenged the outraged Cat, but invited the entire Ranger bench to a tete-a-tete.

Coach Shero looked upon all this havoc with a knowing smile. "Hockey," he says, "is just a love affair when it doesn't have fighting."

Obviously, Schultz is a fighter, not a lover. Witness, if you will, these disturbing regular season statistics: twenty fighting penalties, ten misconducts, and five game misconducts. In all, Mr. Schultz spent a good part of his season taking in penalty box scenery around the league.

Shero claims he's not disturbed at paying Schultz a salary for sitting on his butt half the time. "Watch them," he points out, speaking of Schultz and Bob Kelly—partners in crime. "When they go to the box, they usually take a player from the other club with them." That is, after they scrape the poor fellow up from the ice. Not many people have been known to win fights from the likes of Dave Schultz, let alone walk away from them.

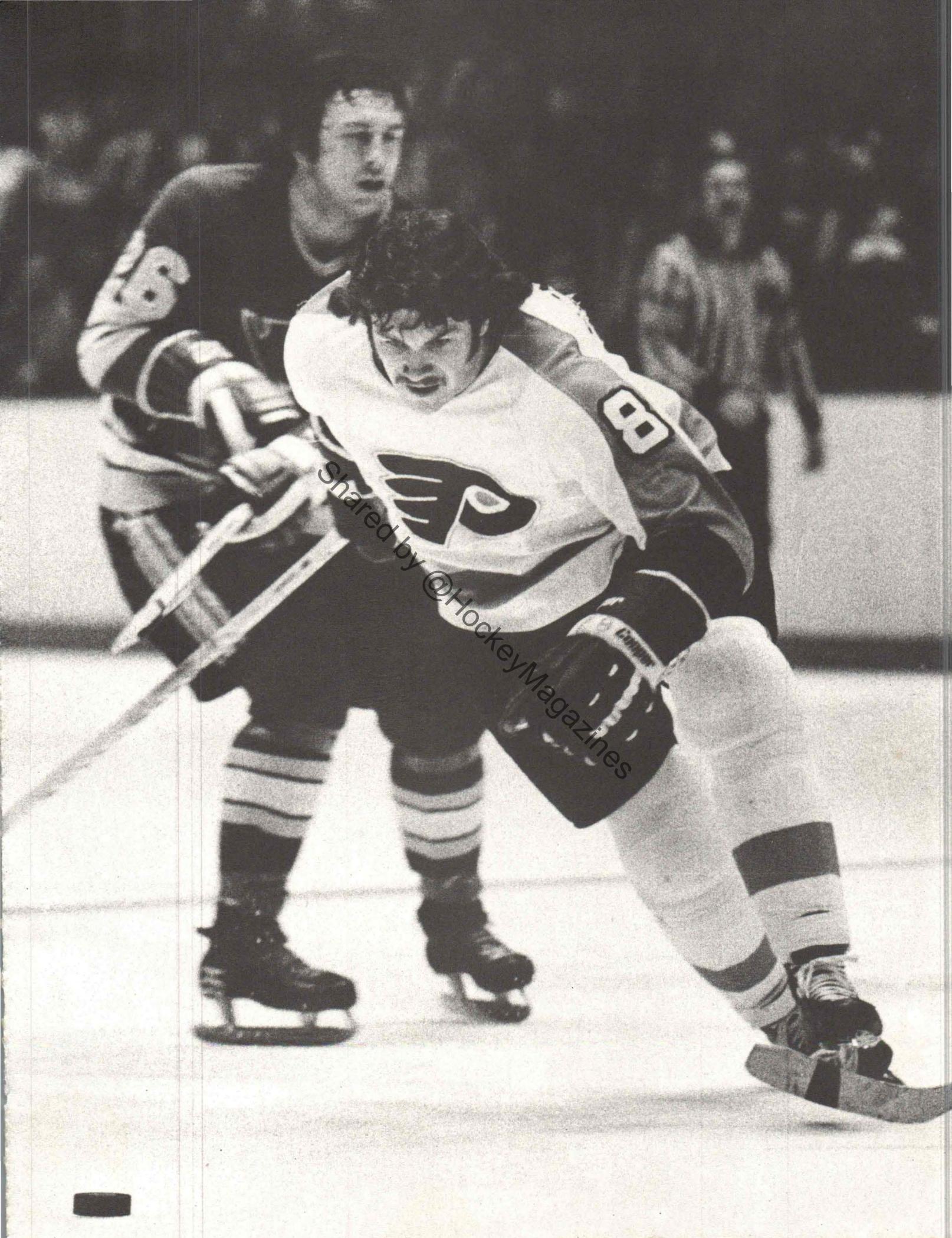
"I never want to hurt anybody in a fight," Schultz insists, sounding quite human. "One night I cut Bryan Hextall during a fight in Atlanta, and when I saw the blood I told him I hadn't intended to cut him. I meant it."

Both Schultz and Bob Kelly, however, admit to losing one clear cut decision—and both to the same man. Wayne Cashman maybe, or Dan Maloney? No, it was the elfin (5-foot-9, 170 pound) Gary Howatt of the New York Islanders.

"Pound for pound," said Schultz admiringly, "Howatt is the toughest fighter in the league.

Imagine a full-sized, Dave Schultz model of Gary Howatt. If what Dave says is true, that guy would have to be illegal!

Dave Schultz cuts between St. Louis defensemen in pursuit of a loose puck.

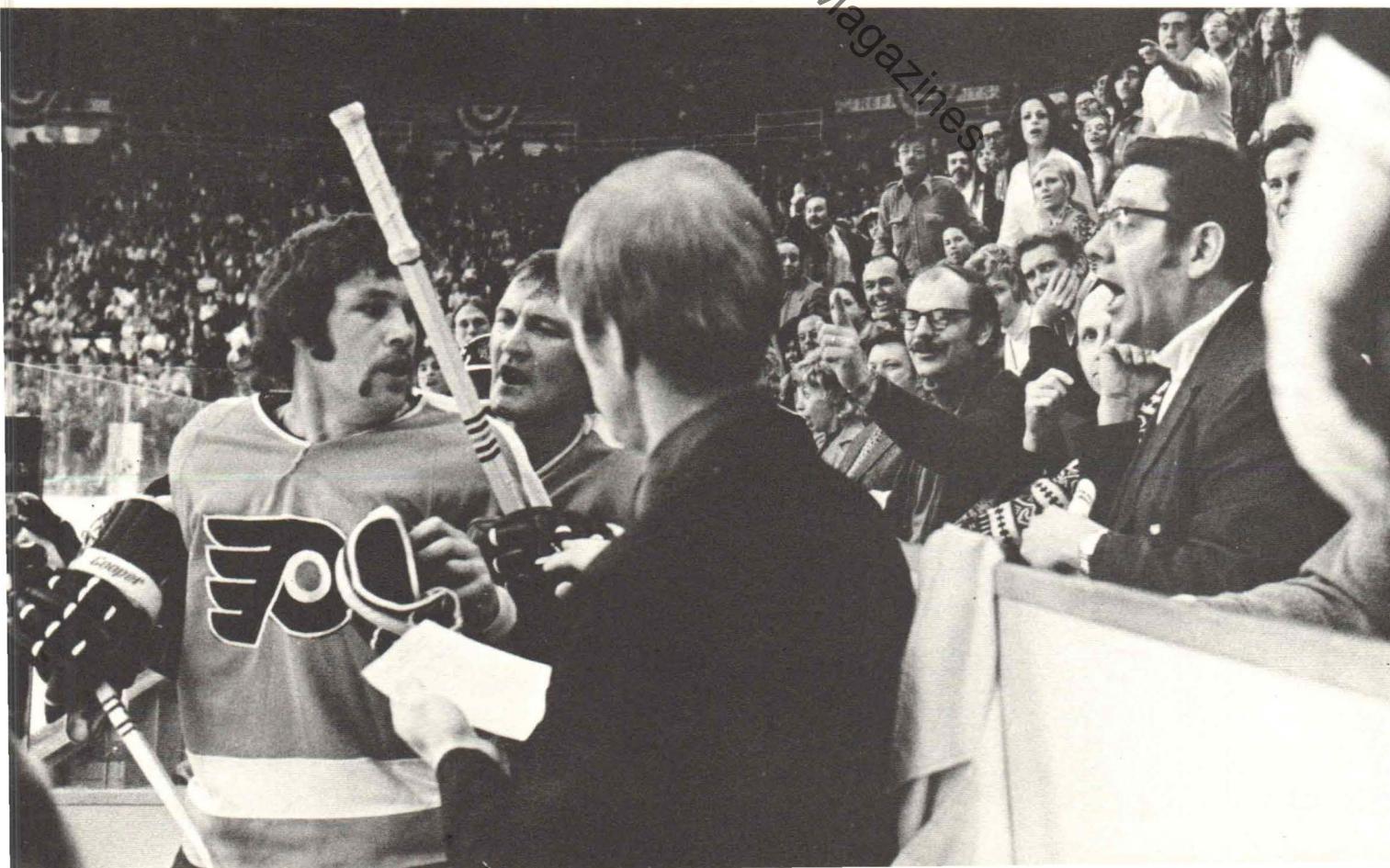


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The brawling Schultz is held back from Hilliard Graves of California.

Dave Schultz is getting various opinions from the crowd.



73 LADY BING
TROPHY: DAVE SCHULZ

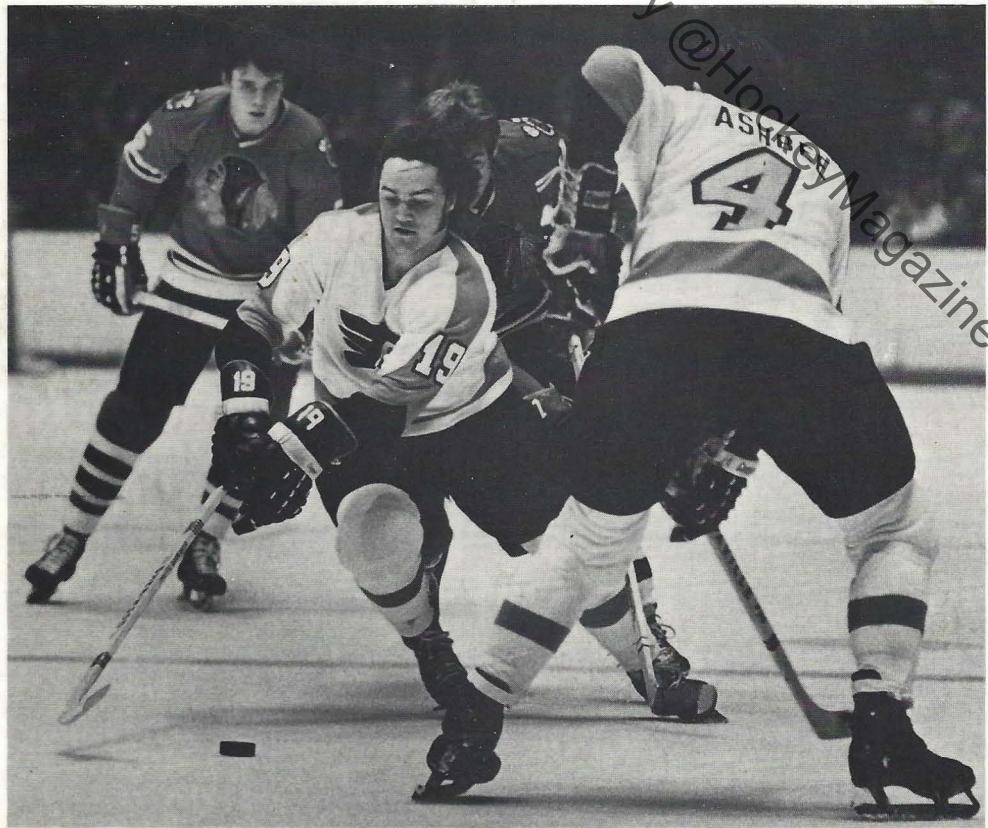
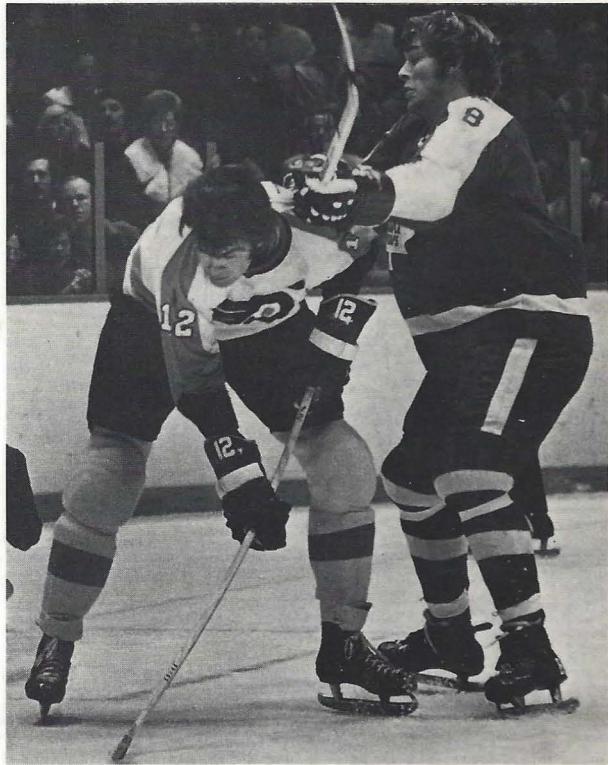
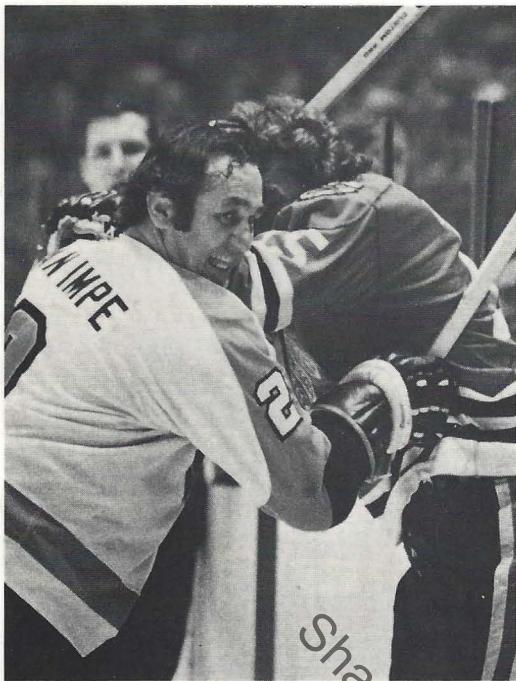
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